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ENSIGN

The Heart of Visiting Teaching, p. 64

Putting Power in Prayer, p. 52

Brigham Young, *by James C. Christensen*

President Brigham Young served as second President of the Church, from 27 December 1847 until his death on 29 August 1877. President Young's practical, forthright, and decisive character contributed to his success as a leader and as one of the great colonizers of the American West.

ENSIGN

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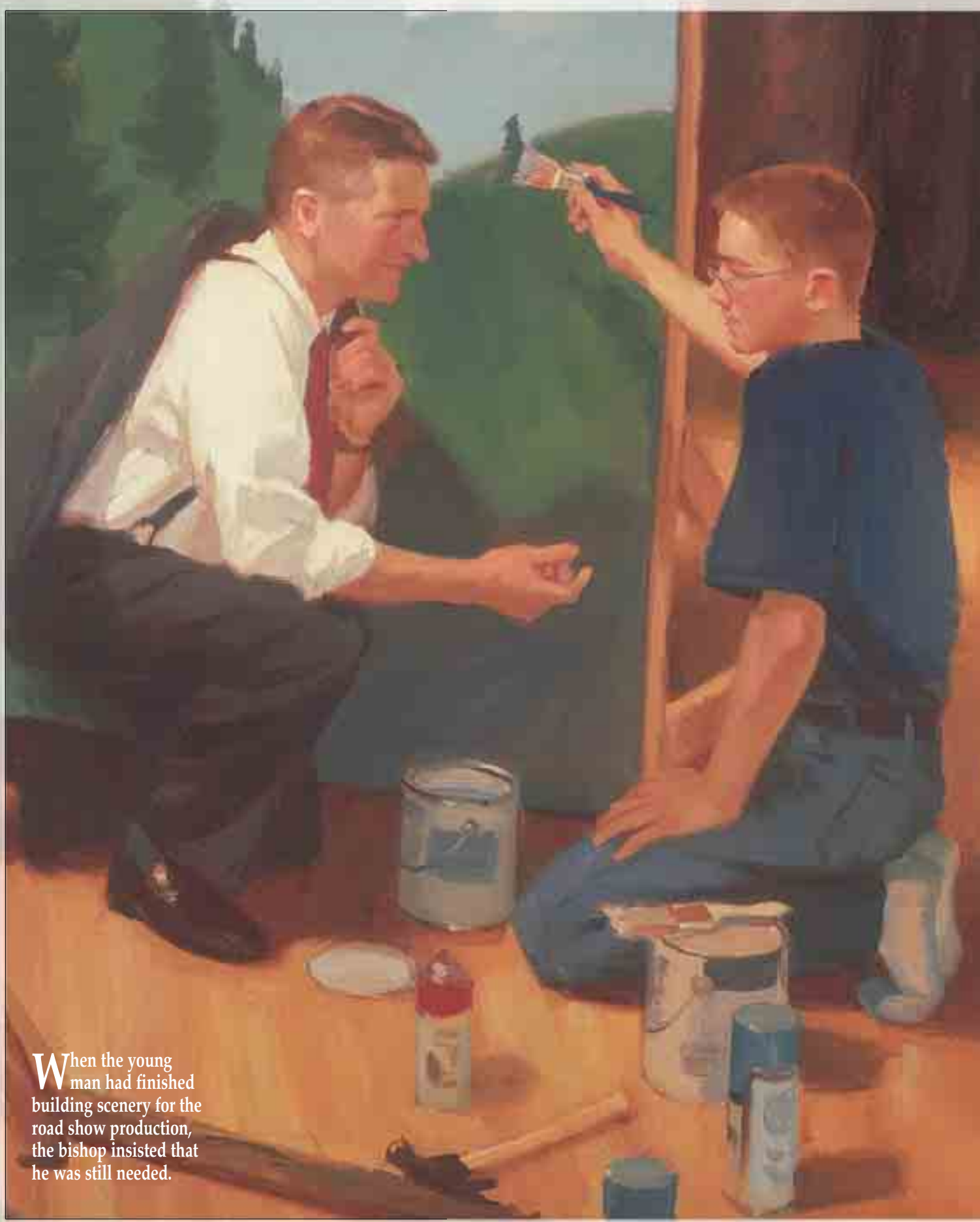


When the young man had finished building scenery for the road show production, the bishop insisted that he was still needed.

What This Work Is All About

BY PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

I should like to share portions of a letter that came to my desk several years ago. I have changed the names to preserve anonymity and have somewhat abbreviated it, paraphrasing a few words in the process. The letter reads:

"Dear President Hinckley,

"When I met you in the elevator at the hospital I had the urge to write you and tell you of some of the things that have happened to me.

"When I was 16 or 17 I cared nothing for the Church and would not have anything to do with it. But a bishop who was concerned about me came over to see me and asked me to help build some scenery for a road show production, and of course I told him no.

"Well, about 10 days went by, and the bishop came back to ask me to build the scenery, and again I told him no. But then he went on to explain that he had asked others and they had told him they didn't know how. He indicated that I was needed. I finally gave in and proceeded to build the scenery.

"When I got it done, I said, 'There is your scenery,' and decided I had done my part. But the bishop insisted that they needed me on the stage to move the scenery and make sure it got put up right and that it got moved carefully as the road show moved from ward to ward. So I finally gave in again.

"That bishop kept me busy for quite a while, and pretty soon I was involved and enjoying it. He then moved from our area and we got a new bishop, and he picked up the challenge and kept after me.

"Bishop Smith had asked me to go on a mission, but I was undecided on that, and when Bishop Sorensen was put in, he asked me also, and I finally decided that I would go.

"Well, the bishop and I went to tell Mom and Dad about my decision. They told the bishop they couldn't pay for it. Dad told the bishop that if I was really sincere about going that I should work and save and pay for the mission myself.

"My eyesight was not the greatest, as you know, and when I went places I had to be taken. When I became 16, I wanted to drive a car more than anything, and Dad took me to several eye doctors, all with the same result. The vision in my right eye was 20/800, and the vision in my left eye was 20/50, and I had astigmatism. So earning enough money to go on a mission was not an easy task. I worked in the sign shop at a department store for six to eight months to save some money. The bishop finally felt it was time for me to go, and we went to talk to my parents again. I had a thousand dollars saved, and the bishop told my dad that the elders quorum would support me for the rest. Dad sat there for a while and said if anybody was going to support his son, he would. I

ILLUSTRATED BY MIKE MALM

Ours is the responsibility of encouraging and cultivating happy homes where fathers and mothers love and respect one another and children grow in an atmosphere of peace and affection and appreciation.

filled out my papers and got my call.

"I went to Japan, where I loved the people and the missionary experiences that I had there. My companions and I baptized several people into the Church. After I came home, I went to work again in the sign shop. During the time I worked there, whenever I went to lunch, I would see a young lady walking up the street, who evidently worked in the same general area. I knew I had met her somewhere before but could not place her.

"Well, one of my missionary companions came home, and after some time we ran around together. Of course, he did all the chauffeuring because of my eyesight. One night he called and wanted to go out on a date, and so I frantically called around to find a date. Well, we went to a party, and guess who he took out. Right, he took out Sister Marilyn Jones, who also had been in Japan and whom I now remembered meeting briefly there on one occasion. She was the girl I had been passing on the street for several months and had not recognized.

"After this party, I went to California with my family for two weeks, and when I got home I found that my missionary friend had been dating the girl I had taken to the party. I thought I'd fix him, so I called Marilyn to go out on a date. You have to realize that it's not easy to do that when you don't drive, so my younger sister drove, and we had eight other youngsters accompany us to a ball game. That should have been enough to discourage any young lady from ever dating me again, but I tried again when my family went to the canyon to pick chokecherries.

"Finally came our date alone, and Dad had to drive me to pick up Marilyn, and then we drove him home and went out on our date and then back to our

house to pick up Dad, who drove us back to her house, and then we went home. On the next date I asked her to marry me, and she told me no. Well, I went out with her some more and asked her to marry me a couple more times, and I finally got a maybe. I thought that was a step in the right direction and persisted. Six months after we started going together, we were married in the Salt Lake Temple.

"President Hinckley, I thought that I loved this young lady at that time, but 17 years later I find that I love her more than I could ever imagine. We now have five wonderful children.

"I have held many positions in the Church: music leader, everything in the elders quorum, assistant ward clerk, ward mission leader, executive secretary, and now I am a counselor in the bishopric.

"I am still working in the sign shop at the department store. I bought a small house about 13 years ago, and as my family got larger my house got smaller. I had to do something, so I added on to my house and made it twice the size. I started this a little over three years ago and have been working on it ever since. It is coming along really well.

"Now for the most amazing piece of news ever. Two years ago in June, I went to a new eye doctor who examined my eyes and asked me what restrictions I had on my driver's license. I told him that I didn't have a license. He said that my eyesight was probably acceptable.

"I sat there in shock, and my wife said, 'Does this mean he could get a driver's license?' The doctor said, 'I don't see why not.' The next day my wife had me signed up for a driver education course, and after I finished it I went to get my license and they checked my eyes. The doctor had written a note explaining my eye problem and that maybe I should not drive at night. The examiner put the letters up, and I read them right off. He went to talk to his supervisor and came back and approved my license with only a minor restriction.

"President Hinckley, the Lord has blessed me more than I can ever deserve. People say how lucky I am that my eyes have improved so much, but I know that it is the Lord's doing. I feel it is because I have tried to serve the Lord and do what I can to build up His kingdom here on the earth. I am sure there are times He is disappointed in me, and I'm sure He should be. But I will try to do my best and be worthy of His blessings upon me and my family."

He concludes with appreciation and testimony and signs his name. I have shared this somewhat lengthy letter because I feel it tells so simply and yet so eloquently what this work is all about.

Our Responsibility

Under the sacred and compelling trust we have as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, ours is a work of redemption, of lifting and saving those who need help. Ours is a task of raising the sights of those of our people who fail to realize the great potential that lies within them. Ours is the responsibility of building self-reliance, of encouraging and cultivating happy homes where fathers and mothers love and respect one another and children grow in an atmosphere of peace and affection and appreciation.

If you will recall what I have just shared, this man, when he was a boy of 16 or 17, was drifting aimlessly and dangerously as so many young men do at that age. He was walking the broad way which leads to destruction. Noting the course he was taking, his bishop, a prayerful and dedicated man, recognized his creative talent as an artist and found a way to challenge him to use that talent in the service of the Church. That bishop was wise enough to know that most young men will respond to a challenge when they know they are needed. No one else in the ward was quite capable of building the kind of scenery the bishop wanted. This less-active boy was capable of this, and the bishop complimented and challenged him with a request that his service was needed.

Here is a great key to activation of many of those who have fallen by the wayside. Each has a talent that can be employed. It is the task of leaders to match those talents with needs and then to offer a challenge. The boy of this letter, whom I shall call Jack, responded, and he soon found himself moving in the direction of the Church rather than away from it.

Then came the challenge to go on a mission. Jack, who was now accustomed to saying yes rather than no, responded affirmatively. The father was not fully converted and responded that his son would have to earn his own funds. That was not all bad. There was something of good in the requirement that he develop self-reliance. He went to work, he provided much of what he needed, he saved his money, and when he had a thousand dollars, the bishop, again under inspiration, felt the time had come when he should go. Jack's brethren in the elders quorum would assist, and that is proper. But the father, with

an awakened sense of pride and of responsibility toward his own son, rose to the occasion, as men usually do when properly confronted.

The Essence of the Gospel

I first met Jack in Japan when he was serving as a missionary there. I interviewed him on two or three occasions. That was before we had the Missionary Training Centers. Young men and women were then sent with no language training and simply plunged in to work at the task when they arrived there. I marveled that this young man, with serious eyesight deficiencies, was able to grasp that difficult language and speak it with power. Behind that was a great effort and a great sense of devotion, and above all, a certain humility and reliance on the Lord with anxious, prayerful pleadings for help.

I can tell you, for I witnessed it, that it was a miracle in his case as it was in the case of many others.

I also first met in Japan and interviewed on a number of occasions the young lady he was later to marry. She had a wonderful spirit, a deep faith, and a moving sense of duty. Their acquaintance in the field was nothing more than having seen one another on one occasion. They worked in widely separated areas. But out of their experiences had come a common touchstone—a new language in which each had learned to share testimony with others while laboring in the great and selfless cause of service to our Father's children.

As he indicated in his letter, their marriage was performed in the Salt Lake Temple. Each knew that only in the Lord's house under the authority of the holy priesthood could they be joined in marriage for time and for all eternity under a covenant which death could not break and time could not destroy. They wanted the very best for themselves; they would not be satisfied with anything else. Be it said to their credit that each has remained true to the sacred covenants they made in the house of the Lord.

Five beautiful and

Each of those who have fallen by the wayside has a talent that can be employed. It is the task of leaders to match those talents with needs and then to offer a challenge.

handsome children have graced that marriage. They are a family with love and appreciation and respect one for another. They have lived in a spirit of self-reliance. A small home which has been enlarged is a home in which father and mother and children gather together and counsel and learn one from another. It is a home in which there is a reading of the scriptures. It is a home in which there is prayer: family prayer and individual prayer. It is a home in which service is taught and exemplified. It is a simple home; it is an unostentatious family. There is not much of wealth, but there is much of peace and goodness and love. The children who grew up there grew in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The father is faithful in his service to the Church. For these many years he has responded to every call made upon him; the mother, likewise. They are good citizens of the community and the nation. They are at peace with their neighbors. They love the Lord. They love life. They love one another.

They have witnessed a miracle in the improvement of his eyesight. To a kind and gracious God goes the credit. This too is of the essence of the gospel, the power of healing and restoration, followed by acknowledgment and thanksgiving.

Increased Retention Needed

Is not this what the work is all about? Said the Savior, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Without great abundance of the things of the world, these, my friends, live abundantly. People such as they are the strength of the Church. In their hearts is a quiet and solid conviction that God lives and that we are accountable to Him; that Jesus is the Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life (see John 14:6); that this work is Their work; that it is true; and that gladness and peace and healing come in walking in obedience to the commandments of God (see D&C 89:18), as set forth in the teachings of the Church.

I do not know whether the two men who served as Jack's bishops know what has become of him. If they know where he is, there must be sweet satisfaction in their hearts. There are thousands of bishops like them, who serve night and day in this great work of activation. And there are tens of thousands of Jacks in this Church whose hearts are touched and who are brought back into activity by a great sense of concern, a quiet expression of love, and a challenge to serve from bishops and others. But there are many, many more who need similar attention.

This work of ours is a great work of redemption. All of us must do more because the consequences can be so remarkable and everlasting. This is our Father's work, and He has laid upon us a divine injunction to seek out and strengthen those in need and those who are weak. As we do so, the homes of our people will be filled with an increased measure of love; the nation, whatever nation it be, will be strengthened by reason of the virtue of such people; and the Church and kingdom of God will roll forward in majesty and power on its divinely appointed mission. □

Ideas for Home Teachers

Preparation

After studying this message, think about an experience you may have had helping someone become fully active in the Church. Prayerfully choose one or two statements from President Hinckley you feel will most benefit those you teach. Then think of a teaching method or activity for each statement that is appropriate for the ages and circumstances of family members. A few examples of how this may be done are provided below.

Suggestions for Teaching

1. Show the title of this message and ask if anyone would like to guess what it is about. Read the first paragraph under "Our Responsibility," and share an experience of how your life has changed because someone was doing "this work." Read aloud the last paragraph, and bear your testimony of doing our Father's work.

2. Discuss why some people are not active in the Church. Read together the letter Jack sent to President Hinckley (pages 2–3), or tell Jack's story in your own words. Make a list of the blessings Jack received and discuss why Jack received them.

3. Compare the work of the Church to the dropping of a pebble in a still pond of water. Why was the Lord's work in Japan increased by the work of Jack's bishops? Read the last two paragraphs, and invite family members to think of people who need to be brought back into activity. Ask what the family could do to help. Invite them to imagine what could happen if even one of those people were to become active.

ACCEPT THE Challenge

It is our responsibility to participate in the ever-reaching destiny of the Church.

By Elder L. Tom Perry
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, and Joseph Smith each started a new gospel dispensation, which is a period of time in which the Lord has at least one authorized servant on the earth who bears the keys of the holy priesthood. When the Lord organizes a dispensation, the gospel is revealed anew so that the people of that dispensation do not have to depend on past dispensations for knowledge of the plan of salvation. The dispensation begun by Joseph Smith is known as "the dispensation of the fulness of times" (D&C 112:30).

The dispensation which commenced with the restoration of the keys of authority to the Prophet Joseph Smith will continue until the second coming of Christ. Although Father Adam holds the keys of all dispensations, Joseph Smith stands at the head of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which is a welding together of the keys, powers, and glories of all previous dispensations.

From the doctrines describing the importance of the dispensation of the fulness of times, one must have a special feeling of being privileged to be part of this final dispensation, when all things are to be accomplished in preparation for the return of our Lord and Savior. Our interests must surely be piqued as we consider where we fit in this divine plan.

As we look at the periods past and our own era in the Church, it is our responsibility to participate in the ever-reaching destiny of the Church. It would seem to me that as we follow the direction of our present prophet, this will be a time of declaring the word of the Lord to the people of the earth with more boldness and more courage than we have ever known before. We have the doctrinal base; we have the organization. We have built from centers of strength a leadership base to spread throughout the world. In a talk given in the October 1995 general conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley certainly sounded the cry for all of us as we approach this next great period in this dispensation of the fulness of times. He said:

"We see some around us who are indifferent concerning the future of this work, who are apathetic, who speak of limitations, who express fears, who spend their time digging out and writing about what they regard to be weaknesses which really are of no consequence. With doubt concerning its past, they have no vision concerning its future.

". . . There is no place in this work for those who believe only in the gospel of doom and gloom. The gospel is good news. It is a message of triumph. It is a cause to be embraced with enthusiasm.

"The Lord never said that there would not be

After we learn all we can about the course we must follow and have proceeded on the path to gain eternal life, we have an obligation to others of our Father in Heaven's children who need help.

THE ASCENT, BY DAVID LYNN

CHRIST AND THE RICH, YOUNG RULER, BY HEINRICH HOFMANN

troubles. Our people have known afflictions of every sort as those who have opposed this work have come upon them. But faith has shown through all their sorrows. This work has consistently moved forward and has never taken a backward step since its inception. . . .

"How glorious is the past of this great cause. It is filled with heroism, courage, boldness, and faith. How wondrous is the present as we move forward to bless the lives of people wherever they will hearken to the message of the servants of the Lord. How magnificent will be the future as the Almighty rolls on His glorious work touching for good all who will accept and live His gospel, and even reaching to the eternal blessing of His sons and daughters of all generations through the selfless work of those whose hearts are filled with love for the Redeemer of the world. . . .

"I invite every one of you, wherever you may be as members of this church, to stand on your feet and with a song in your heart move forward, living the gospel, loving the Lord, and building the kingdom" ("Stay the Course—Keep the Faith," *Ensign,* Nov. 1995, 71–72).

Gaining a knowledge of God's plan leads to many consequences—one of the most profound being an incredible sense of incurred debt to the God of this world, Jesus Christ.

You are a part of this special generation. It is not by chance that you are here at this important time in the history of the Lord's work. It is your opportunity to declare this message of the Restoration with greater force and effect than any of the previous generations. You have been preserved and prepared for your time on earth to be a part of this great army, to make this the most exciting period in the history of mankind in declaring the gospel of our Lord and Savior to our Father in Heaven's children. You are better educated and trained for this responsibility than any of the other generations which have inherited the earth. If your declarations are to have any force and effect, your words must be backed up by your actions. The Lord has established the standards and values you must live by to receive His blessings. The world is struggling today to understand the benefits of living His standards.

After we learn all we can about the course we must follow and have proceeded on the path to gain eternal life, we have an obligation to others of our Father in Heaven's children who need help. Gaining a knowledge of God's plan leads to many consequences—one of the most profound being an incredible sense of incurred debt to the God of this world, Jesus Christ. The plan of salvation balances on the need for a redeemer. Jesus Christ performed this role. He atoned for our sins, and in the words of Isaiah and Peter, "With his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5; see also 1 Pet. 2:24).

The Apostle Paul felt deeply this sense of incurred debt when he wrote this in his letter to the Romans: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

I challenge you to use all of the power and enthusiasm your souls can muster to move forward with this great opportunity which is ours. Let us again hear the Prophet Joseph Smith's words ring in our ears: "Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage . . . and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free" (D&C 128:22).

We have prayed that the hearts of the leaders of nations would be softened to the proclaiming of the gospel in their lands. We have literally seen doors open to us that have been closed for generations. The Church's message is of joy and salvation, and it must be presented to all of the inhabitants of the earth. That same testimony Joseph Smith bore to his neighbors in upstate New York must be heard in many languages declaring that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that His ancient gospel has been restored, and that the Church of Jesus Christ is again available to all mankind. May we accept the challenge that we have been called to assume in this great day. □

Adapted from a Church Educational System fireside address given at Brigham Young University on 5 May 1996.

Let's Talk about It

Most Ensign *articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:*

1. Why are we obligated to help further the work of the kingdom?

2. What can we do to better prepare ourselves for opportunities to share the gospel?

3. Amid all of the difficulties we face, how can we develop a greater vision of the future of the Lord's work?

ME A PIONEER?

By Mei Hsiang Moyer

When I was baptized as a young girl in Taiwan, the first Latter-day Saint in my family, I didn't realize I had become a pioneer.

I was 14 in the summer of 1957. One morning at home in Tainan, Taiwan, I heard the children outside yelling, *"Mei Kuo Jen! Mei Kuo Jen!"* (American! American!) When I went out, two Americans stood outside our front gate. They introduced themselves in Mandarin, saying they represented The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and wanted to tell us about their teachings. My older sister, who lived 20 miles away, had given them my address, telling them I was interested in learning English and might be interested in their message. However, since my family had been Buddhists for generations, we had never heard of this church before. I said, "Wait a moment. I need to ask my parents for permission." I went to my parents and explained why these Americans were at our front gate. To my surprise, my parents let them into our home.

The missionaries taught us about the Prophet Joseph Smith, who went into a grove of trees to pray to know which church to join. God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ appeared to him. And he was only 14—just my age. I was impressed. The missionaries taught me and my parents how to pray, and for the first time in my life I began to pray. I felt warm inside but didn't know why. The missionaries continued

One of the most heartbreaking things happened when my father tore apart my Bible. I cried for days afterward. Now I had no scriptures to read.

ILLUSTRATED BY GREGG THORKELSON

to come and taught us six discussions. Then one visit, they asked my parents to accept the challenge to be baptized. My parents were afraid of making a change and asked the elders not to come back.

The Answer Came

A few months later another set of missionaries came. My parents did not let them in our home but accepted from them the address of the church building where they taught English lessons. This was a turning point in my life. I began to learn English, but I was also able to hear the missionary discussions again. Eventually, my parents found out and forbade me to go back. But by now I already had a happy feeling in my heart when I thought about the Prophet Joseph Smith seeing God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. I asked Heavenly Father to help me know it was true. The answer came; my heart was full of joy.

Since I now knew Joseph Smith was a prophet, I also believed the Book of Mormon was true. Even though the Book of Mormon had not yet been translated into Chinese and my English wasn't good enough to read it in that language, the missionaries had given me pamphlets in Chinese. I read them again and again, and I knew what they said was true. I made my decision. I was ready to be baptized. I prayed to Heavenly Father to help me, since I knew my parents had said that if I joined the Church I would not be their daughter anymore.

I prayed very hard, asking Heavenly Father to soften my parents' hearts. He answered my prayers, and in September 1958 I was baptized. What a beautiful day it was! I do not have the words to describe the joy I felt that day. My parents did not come, but when I came home, they did not scold me or get angry. I was grateful for that.

When I walked inside the Tainan branch, I saw my parents both dressed in white baptismal clothes.

GAINING A TESTIMONY

"Logic itself affirms that a loving Heavenly Father would not abandon His children without providing a way for them to learn of Him. One of the great messages of the Restoration is that the windows of heaven are open. All who seek to know the truth may, through revelations of the Spirit, know for themselves."

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Pure Testimony," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 23.

Soon after my baptism, the missionaries told me that Elder Mark E. Petersen (1900–1984) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was coming to Taipei. They asked me if I wanted to go. Right away I thought about the Apostle Peter in the New Testament and realized what a great opportunity it would be for me to meet an Apostle. I went to Taipei. After the meeting, I met Elder Petersen and his wife. They were very kind to me. I felt my blessings were great, and I wanted to shout for joy!

Sharp Words

Unfortunately my parents grew upset again about my becoming a Latter-day Saint. If I blessed my food, my brother took it away from me. If I went to church too much, I got in trouble. Except for my two younger sisters, it seemed everyone in my family was against me and had sharp words for me. It was very difficult. They even read my diary. One of the most heartbreaking things happened when my father tore apart my Bible. I remember how I cried for days afterward. Now I had no scriptures to read. Countless nights I lay on my bed facing the wall and praying to my Heavenly Father.

My life at that time seemed very lonely. Meanwhile my father was out of work. My older brother became the breadwinner, so every child had to obey him. For this reason, I asked Heavenly Father to help me find a job. When I did, it was a better-paying job than my big brother's, so our lives became a little better. I was also able to help support my family.

In 1964 when I was called to be a missionary, I quit my job. Of course my parents were unhappy about it. My boss said I didn't know what I was doing. In fact, most of my friends thought the same way and tried to talk me out of it. But my two younger sisters had grown to love the gospel, and before I left home they were baptized. Within a week I was on my way to Taipei to report to the mission home. Soon I was out sharing the gospel with people.

Illness and a Dream

I was having the best time of my life, when suddenly I became very ill. One night I dreamed my deceased grandfather came to see me. It was so real. I thought I was going to die soon. My companion sat by my bed crying because I was so weak. The next morning, I wrote a letter to my parents to let them know how I felt about the gospel. I wanted to bear my testimony to them and tell them how much I loved them in case I died. In the letter I told them of my dream of my grandfather. However, I didn't tell them how ill I was because I knew they would want me to come home, and I didn't want to leave my mission.

I didn't know it at the time, but my father was also very ill. He had been lying sick in bed for several months. He could barely move. My mom asked all kinds of doctors for help. She even went to the Buddhist temple to ask for help. Nothing happened. In fact, my father got even sicker. Two sister missionaries talked to my mom about the healing power of priesthood blessings, so my mom asked the elders to give my father a priesthood blessing. Right after that, my father began to get well. It was during that time that my letter arrived. My dad's heart was softened as he read about my dream of my grandfather coming to see me. He felt it was true. My testimony helped him to decide to join the Church, but I did not know that at the time.

During the following month, I got better. One day my companion told me we had an assignment to go to Tainan. I was shocked. I told her I did not want to go home. She said, "We are not going to your home. We need to visit the Tainan branch." I felt very strange. During the six-hour train ride, my emotions were like a roller coaster as I wondered why. When we walked inside the Tainan branch, I saw my parents both dressed in white baptismal clothes. What a wonderful surprise! I thanked Heavenly Father for helping my parents gain a testimony of the gospel.

Blessings of the Temple

Today I have a family of my own. I have been blessed with a loving husband who holds the priesthood. Now Taipei has a beautiful temple. My husband and I have been sealed for time and all eternity. I have been sealed to my parents also.

My husband and I both realize that as the first in our families to join the Church, we faced challenges similar to the early pioneers. We have had to struggle against the generations of tradition. It has not been easy, but with our Heavenly Father's help we have been blessed. □

Mei Hsiang Moyer is a member of the Pekin Ward, Peoria Illinois Stake.

PUSHING ON TO ZION

KANESVILLE, IOWA, 1846–1853

By William G. Hartley

Without warning on 30 June 1846, U.S. army recruiters from Fort Leavenworth (Kansas frontier) rode into the newly established camp of Latter-day Saints located at what is now Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the east bank of the Missouri River. These recruiters were looking for President Brigham Young to present the Church with an invitation from U.S. president James K. Polk to enlist a battalion to serve in the newly declared Mexican War.

Joining the recruiters on 11 July was Thomas L. Kane, a Philadelphia lawyer from a prominent family and a future lifelong friend and advocate for the Latter-day Saints. He described the encampment that spread out before his eyes: "[The bottomlands] were crowded with covered carts and wagons; and each one of the Council Bluff hills opposite was crowned with its own great camp, gay with bright white canvas, and alive with the busy stir of swarming occupants. In the clear blue morning air, the smoke streamed up from more than a thousand cooking fires. Countless roads and bypaths checkered all manner of geometric figures on the hillsides. Herd boys were dozing upon the slopes; sheep and horses, cows and oxen, were feeding around them, and other herds in the luxuriant meadow of the then swollen river. From a single point I counted four thousand head of cattle in view at one time. As I approached the camps, it seemed to me the children there were to prove still more numerous."[1]

Kane could not know then that he was witnessing the start of a seven-year occupation of that location, and that shortly these Saints would build a town there and name it Kanesville in his honor.[2]

Soon the army recruiters found President Young. Enlisting in what became the Mormon Battalion were about 500 volunteers, more than one-fourth of the Saints' best manpower in the area. To enlist was a test of loyalty, for the men did not want to march 2,000 miles or leave behind their homeless families to fend for themselves. Yet on 16 July they formally enlisted. On the 18th they received counsel from President Young and had a farewell ball before marching south.

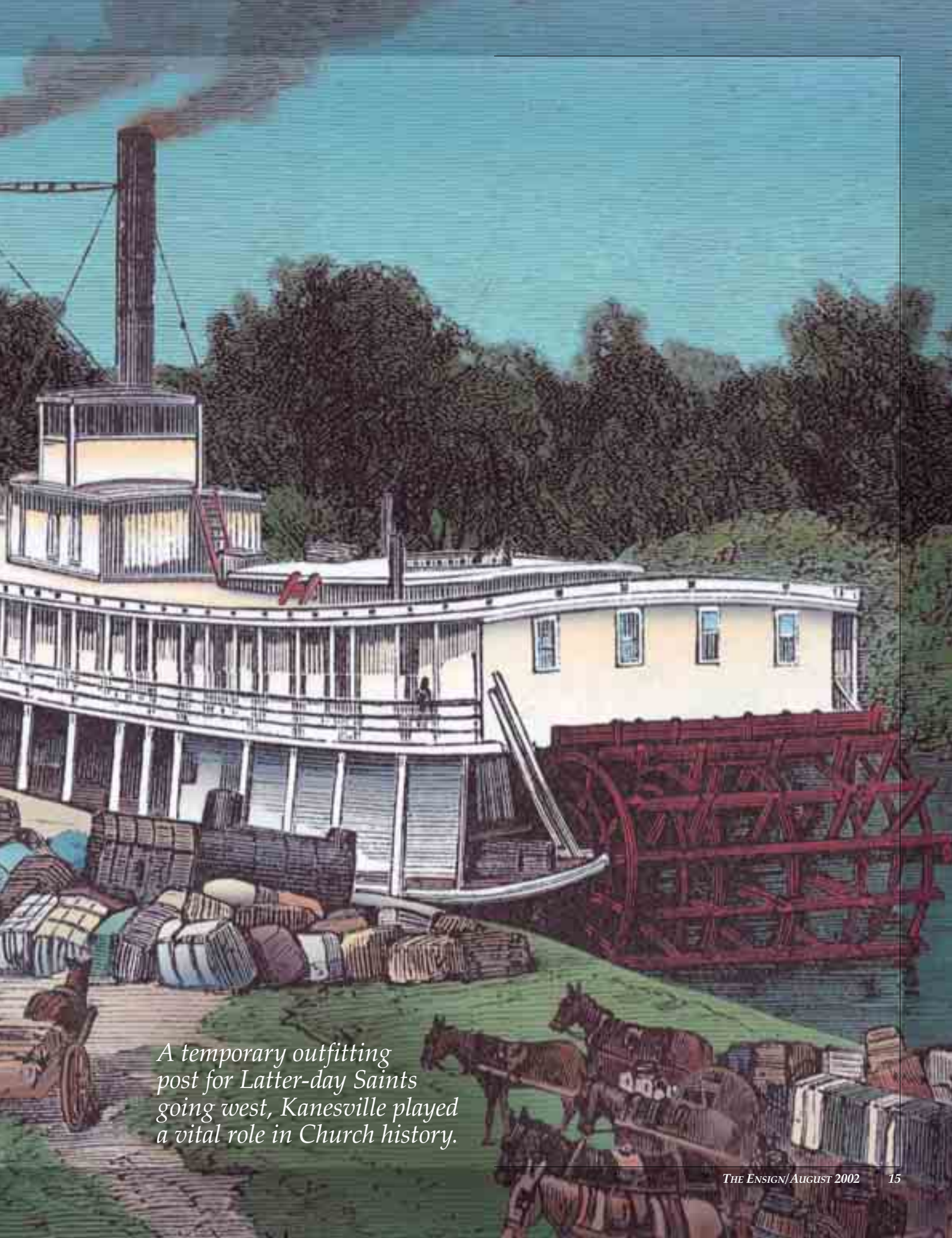
President Polk's call for a battalion to march to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and on to California was a government favor to the Church. In return for the battalion's service, the Church and its members would benefit from the soldiers' pay. But the call came at a very difficult time.

Settling In (June 1846–May 1847)

The encampment on the Missouri described by Kane had been set up in mid-June 1846. President Young's lead company from Nauvoo established Church headquarters on what the Saints called Redemption Hill on Mosquito Creek's north side about

Far right: A steamboat unloads passengers at Kanesville. Center: President Brigham Young encourages Latter-day Saints to enlist in the Mormon Battalion. Oval inset: Thomas L. Kane.

BRIGHAM YOUNG RECRUITING MEN FOR THE MORMON BATTALION, BY WILLIAM MAUGHAN



A temporary outfitting post for Latter-day Saints going west, Kanesville played a vital role in Church history.

eight miles northeast of Sarpy's post at Traders Point. They erected a bowery for meetings and socials. More and more Saints arrived from Nauvoo, creating an eight-mile-long "grand encampment." On 29 June the Church's newly built ferryboat started moving Saints across the Missouri River, some 5,000 total, to Nebraska campsites (which became known as Winter Quarters). Another 8,000 or more founded camps throughout southwestern Iowa on lands being vacated by the Pottawattamie, Ottawa, and Chippewa people.

As August 1846 waned, President Young gave up plans for the Saints to migrate to the Rocky Mountains that year. Facing a wait until the next spring, Saints on the Iowa side fanned out and established dozens of temporary cabin clusters by streams and groves within a 40-mile radius of present-day Council Bluffs. Daniel and Henry W. Miller founded Miller's Hollow in what is now downtown Council Bluffs and held meetings in what once was an army blockhouse. Henry Miller served as a Latter-day Saint bishop there in what became known as the Blockhouse Branch. As family encampments sprang up in the area, some took on unique names such as Little Pigeon (Allred family) and Macedonia (Perkins family).

Elder Orson Hyde of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles settled into what came to be called Hyde Park. After establishing his home 10 miles southeast of Miller's Hollow, he left in July 1846 with Elders John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt to give leadership to the Church in England. When he returned in May 1847, he found that President Young had gone west but left word for Elder Hyde to stay there and direct Church matters.

Return of the Mormon Battalion (July 1847)

When their yearlong enlistment ended in July 1847, members of the Mormon Battalion returned by various routes to meet their families in Utah, on the Mormon Trail, or back in the Council Bluffs area.

Reddick Allred wrote of the joyous occasion of his return: "Dec. 19, 1847. I crossed the Missouri River and went 8 miles to Little Pigeon, Allred's settlement, where I found my wife and daughter living with father—all well and overjoyed at the safe return of their soldier boy and husband. . . . After we rested awhile Prest. Young proclaimed a jubilee in the Log Tabernacle at Kanesville and invited the returned soldiers. As Br. Wm. Hyde and I were approaching, President Young said to Prest. Kimball and others (pointing to us), 'These men were the salvation of this Church.' We all had a free dance and enjoyed it very much."[3]

The Log Tabernacle

President Young and others from Utah had returned temporarily to Winter Quarters by the fall of 1847. On 4 December, while trying to conduct an overcrowded conference on the Iowa side in the blockhouse, President Young proposed that a large log house be built in Miller's Hollow for temporary use. He told the congregation not to be surprised if a city should be built there.[4] Henry W. Miller and about 200 workmen immediately went to work, felling cottonwood trees, cutting them into logs, and fashioning them into a tabernacle—all within three weeks' time. Miller's workmen finished the large building just in time for the historic conference held 23–27 December, which some 1,000 Saints attended. On the 24th Elder Orson Pratt dedicated the tabernacle as a house of thanksgiving. On the 25th the congregation sustained 12 men as high councilors, giving them municipal power as well; approved that bishops' courts serve as civil magistrates until Iowa extended its jurisdiction over that frontier area; and sustained two men to be marshals. Then on the 27th the conference dealt with a surprising and historic matter of major Church business—reconstituting the First Presidency, which had not been established since the Prophet Joseph Smith's death.

Left: Replica of the Kanesville Tabernacle. Below: Etching of the Kanesville, Iowa, valley by Frederick Piercy.

Reestablishing a First Presidency (December 1847)

Earlier, on 5 December, nine of the Twelve had met at Elder Hyde's home. Elder Hyde later reported, "The voice of God came from on high, and spake to the Council [saying] Let my servant Brigham step forth and receive the full power of the presiding Priesthood in my Church and kingdom." He affirmed: "This was the voice of the Almighty unto us. . . . I am one that was present . . . and did hear and feel the voice from heaven, and we were filled with the power of God." It was moved and approved that President Brigham Young be sustained as President of the Church. They approved his choice of counselors: Elders Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards. Outside, people came to the Hydes' door and knocked, worried because they felt houses shake and the ground tremble and thought there had been an earthquake. It was the Lord speaking to His leaders, Elder Hyde assured them.[5]

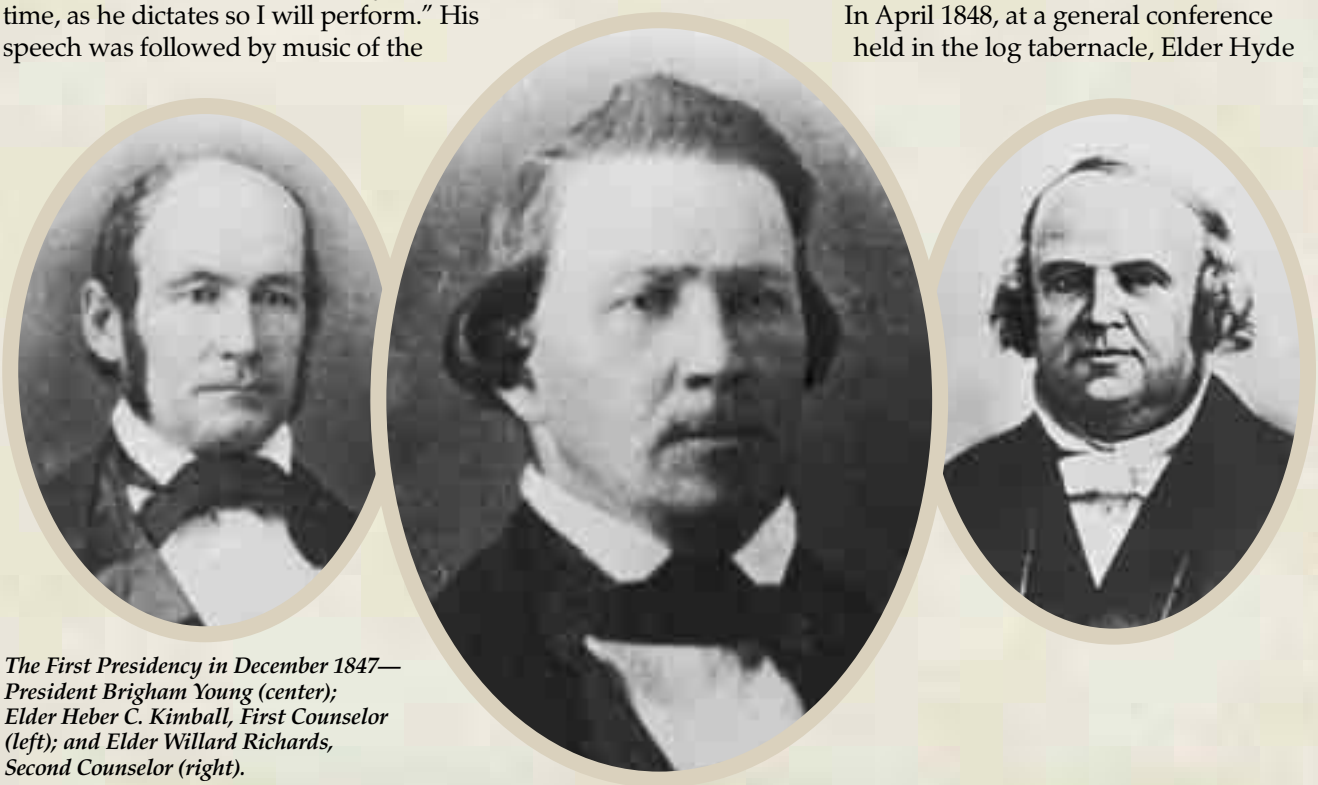
At the December conference, without saying anything about the revelation, the Twelve put before the people the proposal that the First Presidency be reestablished, consisting of Elders Young, Kimball, and Richards. Voting by priesthood quorums in turn, attendees approved. "The spirit of the Lord . . . rested upon the people in a powerful manner," President Young said later. "This is one of the happiest days of my life. . . . Nothing more has been done today than what I knew would be done when Joseph died." After the vote he concluded, "The Lord's will is my will all the time, as he dictates so I will perform." His speech was followed by music of the band and Elder George A. Smith leading the Saints in shouting: "Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to God and the Lamb. Amen! Amen! And Amen!"[6]

The First Presidency reorganization received a sustaining vote at the Church's next annual conference held at Kanesville on 8 April 1848. At that point, some 10,000 Saints were in the Kanesville region compared to only 5,000 in Utah.[7] Similar sustaining votes took place that August in England and in October in Salt Lake City. Orson Hyde, by seniority, became President of the Quorum of the Twelve. John Smith, brother of Joseph Smith Sr., became Presiding Patriarch in the Church.[8]

Kanesville Tabernacle as Community Center

The log tabernacle served as Kanesville's main meetinghouse. A Seventies Jubilee was held there on 16–21 January 1848. Latter-day Saints from both sides of the river enjoyed a six-day gathering for worshiping, preaching, celebrating, and dancing. Mornings featured talks by General Authorities; in the afternoons and evenings, dancing was interspersed with singing, band numbers, and other amusements. During the Jubilee, Saints signed two petitions. One urged the Iowa legislature to make the Pottawattamie tract a county, which happened later that year. The other encouraged the federal government to establish a post office in the area, which it did in March 1848, with the name of Kane.[9]

In April 1848, at a general conference held in the log tabernacle, Elder Hyde



The First Presidency in December 1847—President Brigham Young (center); Elder Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor (left); and Elder Willard Richards, Second Counselor (right).

proposed and the congregation approved that the settlement be renamed Kanesville, to honor Thomas L. Kane. Of Kane, Horace K. Whitney wrote, "This young man appears to be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to bring about our salvation at the present time."[10] Kane felt deep sympathy for the plight of the Latter-day Saint refugees. When he returned to the East, he served as an unofficial adviser to President Young. In 1850 he published a talk he had given to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, titling it "The Mormons." Kane helped negotiate a peaceful settlement to the Utah War and paid at least two other visits to Utah, where he and his wife, Elizabeth, were honored guests.

Elections, balls, socials, school graduations, tithing collection, and meetings of the Blockhouse Branch and the Pottawattamie Stake High Council were held regularly in the log tabernacle. Unfortunately, by early 1850 damage from water seepage forced the Saints to dismantle the tabernacle. Apparently, some of its logs were reused to help construct the Pigeon Creek Branch Tabernacle, whose exact location is unknown.[11]

Abandonment of Winter Quarters (April 1848)

In April 1848 Winter Quarters closed down because the government would not allow the Saints to stay any longer on Indian lands. Residents able to go west to Utah did; in addition, about 3,000 moved eastward across the river to Kanesville and other communities in southwestern Iowa.

Despite constant departures of those going west, Kanesville actually grew in size because of new arrivals from the eastern United States and Europe. By March 1849, to help Church communications, a six-times-a-year mail service commenced between Kanesville and Salt Lake City. A "downtown" developed near the tabernacle. Businesses included a hotel, a tinsmith, doctors, lawyers, a tailor, and a blacksmith. A two-story building served as courthouse, concert hall, and school. An 1849 visitor described Kanesville as "a scrubby town of 80 to 100 log cabins." By 1850 there were about 350 homes. The federal census that year tallied 5,058 residents in the Kanesville precinct, and Pottawattamie County was the sixth most populated in Iowa, with 7,828 residents.[12] That fall and winter,

Oliver Cowdery's Return to the Church

Oliver Cowdery, who with the Prophet Joseph Smith received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist and who was one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, fell out of fellowship with the Church in 1838. He never went to Nauvoo but became a lawyer in Tiffin, Ohio. Friends, especially brother-in-law Phineas Young (President Young's brother), encouraged him to return to the fold. They succeeded.

Phineas Young accompanied Oliver, wife Elizabeth, and daughter Maria Cowdery from their home in Wisconsin to the bluffs. On Saturday afternoon, 21 October 1848, they arrived during a local conference. One report says Elder Orson Hyde, who was conducting the meeting, spotted Oliver, came down from the stand and embraced him, took him by the arm, and escorted him to the platform. Elder Hyde invited him to speak to the congregation of nearly 2,000 Saints. He said:

"Friends and Brethren, my name is Cowdery, Oliver Cowdery. In the early history of this church I stood identified with her, and one in her councils." Then he bore testimony as one of the Three Witnesses: "I wrote with my own pen the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages) as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph, as he translated it by the gift and power of God." He stated, "I beheld with my eyes and handled with my hands the gold plates from which it was transcribed," and testified, "That book is true." He added, "I was present with Joseph, when an holy angel from God came down from heaven and conferred or restored, the Aaronic Priesthood," and "I was present with Joseph when the Melchizedek Priesthood was conferred by the holy angels from God on high."

PAINTING BY MIKE MALM

Oliver Cowdery and Orson Hyde

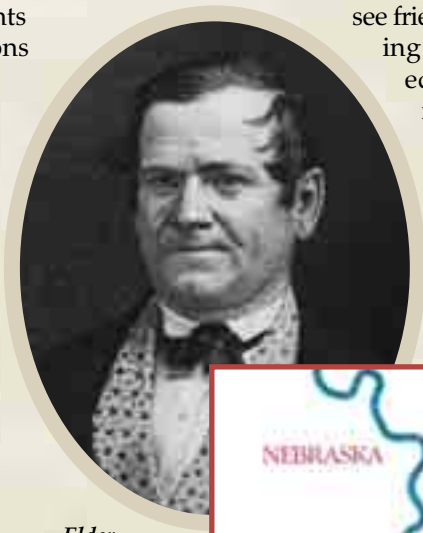
On 30 October, he spent the evening talking with Elders Hyde and George A. Smith, and on 5 November he met with the high priests and the Pottawattamie High Council in the log tabernacle. "I wish to come humbly and be one in your midst," he said. "I only wish to be identified with you; I am out of the church, I am not a member of the church. I wish to become a member of the church again. I wish to come in at the door. I know the door." On 12 November Elder Hyde baptized Oliver Cowdery in Mosquito Creek. Brother Cowdery planned to go west the next year but did not, due to family situations and lack of means. He decided to wait another year, but then his health deteriorated and he died on 3 March 1850 in Missouri. □

(See Scott H. Faulring, "The Return of Oliver Cowdery," in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson,* ed. Stephen D. Ricks and others [2000], 117–73; B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church,* 1:139, 146; Pottawattamie High Council 1846–1852, 5 Nov. 1848, Church Archives; and Journal of Reuben Miller, Church Archives.)

principal T. S. Rucker operated the Kanesville Academy, where children, for three dollars in tuition, were taught in "the usual branches of learning and science."[13] Now that Kanesville was the county seat, the Saints took an active part in Iowa politics, electing from their own ranks a county commission, judges, a prosecuting attorney, sheriff, clerks, and justices of the peace.

Hub for Dozens of Settlements

Kanesville became a hub as the Saints made "heavy settlements in all directions on the good land that abounds in the country."[14] Nearly 90 of these settlements existed in southwestern Iowa between 1846 and 1852, bearing such names as Zabriskie Hollow, Upper Keg Creek, Harris Grove, and Carterville. Most were not villages or even hamlets but just a handful of settlers by a grove or stream. Although very small, many had a school, and some set up small water- or horse-powered gristmills. Most Saints farmed. The rich Iowa soil produced corn, potatoes, beans, turnips, and watermelons abundantly. In October 1851, Little Pigeon reported its farmers had grown a carrot weighing three and one-half pounds, a beet weighing seven pounds, and a six-and-a-half-pound radish.[15] Farmers sold their surpluses in Kanesville to residents and to gold seekers heading west. Jonathan Browning, whose son John M. gained fame later as the world's premier gunsmith, had a shop eight miles south of Kanesville. His advertisement in the local newspaper, the *Frontier Guardian,* on 4 April 1849 said he would manufacture to order "revolving rifles and pistols; also slide guns, from 5 to 25 shooters." Just southwest of Kanesville, Church officials erected another tabernacle called the Welsh Tabernacle, about which records offer little information. We do know that a Fourth of July parade in 1850 escorted Elder Hyde to that tabernacle.



Elder Orson Hyde

Elder Hyde as a Leader

When President Young and others went back to Utah in the spring of 1848, Elder Hyde became the "Presiding Elder of the church East of the Rocky Mountains."[16] He was assisted ably by the high council, which usually met every other Saturday. In the Latter-day Saint settlements, bishops or branch presidents conducted Sunday meetings and cared for members' physical and spiritual needs. For example, on 31 January 1847, the Winter Quarters Municipal High Council assigned Bishop Joseph Knight Jr. "to superintend and direct the cutting of timber on the East side of the river & see that it be not needlessly destroyed."[17] By the end of 1848, Kanesville authorities had some 40 branches to look after. Leaders sent high councilors, circuit riders, and other authorities to visit these places regularly.

Twice a year leaders conducted general conferences. These gatherings provided religious instruction and motivation and also gave members a chance to see friends from other branches. In promoting one conference, the *Frontier Guardian*, edited by Elder Hyde, reminded the members, "They can come with their teams and covered wagons, and bring their bread and dinner, and a bed or two; and the friends residing at and near this place should make preparations to entertain strangers from abroad."[18] In the fall of 1848 the high priests quorum held meetings on the first Sunday, the seventies on the third Sunday, with attendees coming from almost all of the nearby branches. In February 1851 the elders quorum was meeting regularly and, using a notice in the *Frontier Guardian*, invited all elders to join the quorum. In April 1851 the area's conference was held "at the Grove."[19] Following Utah's precedent set the year before, Saints in the North Pigeon Branch in 1850 celebrated Pioneer Day on the 24th of July with music, orations, and a talk by an 1847 pioneer.

The Poor Who Couldn't Go West

Since Nauvoo, the Saints had worked actively to help their poor with the migration west. This resolve remained in place now that the Saints were on the Missouri River. On 3 December 1846 President Young ordained Joseph Knight Jr. a bishop and set him apart to officiate "on the east side of the river near the ferry"[20] with the primary responsibility of caring for the poor. By January 1847, men in his ward were building houses for the Mormon Battalion "widows," or wives left behind. "Br. Knight is as cunning as any other man at begging . . . for the poor," a colleague noted.[21] Although harvest season 1848 was a "general time of health, peace, prosperity and plenty with us

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Drawing of the main street in Kanesville, Iowa, by resident George Simons.

at the Bluffs,"[22] by year's end there were more needy than the bishops could provide for. Elder Hyde informed President Heber C. Kimball in April 1849, "We have had our hands full to keep soul and body together among the poor."[23]

In June 1849 Elder Hyde complained that wealthier Saints were assisting the poor to reach Kanesville, then leaving them. "This is overburthening us here and if suffered to continue will destroy us. . . . To see the poor flocking here, having nothing to help themselves with, and do not know how to make a hill of corn or potatoes, is not agreeable."[24] In July 1849 Bishop Knight stepped down as local presiding bishop because of poor health. Bishop Isaac Clark succeeded him.

Stopover for Saints Heading West

To go west by wagon and teams was not cheap. People had to obtain their own outfits or pay to go with someone else. President Hyde reported in 1850 that outfits that year cost about $600 each, equivalent in today's dollars to about $13,000.[25] It was not wise for any to head for Utah unless they had "team and wagon sufficient to come through without any assistance from the valley," the First Presidency instructed from Utah in June 1849. "And they should bring breadstuffs sufficient to last them a few months after their arrival."[26] Given cost and distances, Saints by the hundreds stopped in the Kanesville area for a few days, weeks, months, or years, depending on needs. When the trail season for 1850 opened, the First Presidency urged Elder Hyde to "push the Saints to Zion and persuade all good brethren to come, who have a wheelbarrow, and faith enough to roll it over the mountains." It was a "duty devolving upon the Saints to gather to the Valley, as soon as circumstances will permit, to assist in building up Zion."[27]

European Emigrants

Southwest of Kanesville, by a bend in the Missouri River, Saints built the Council Point settlement to serve as a landing place for steamboats. Between 1848 and 1852, more than 8,000 European Latter-day Saints disembarked at the landing, which became known as Emigrants' Landing. They found shelter and jobs until they could round up outfits and supplies to go west.

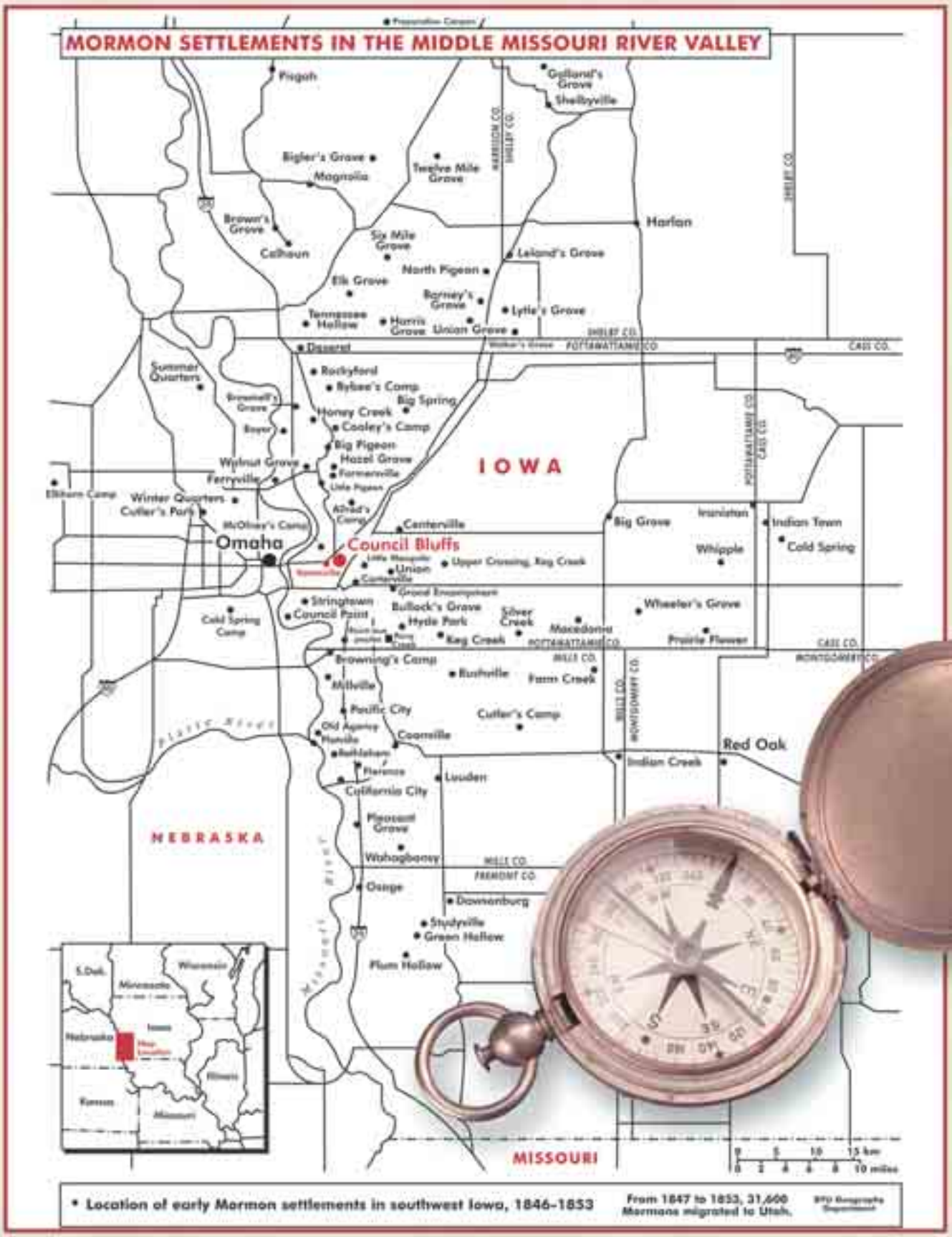
Kanesville Cemetery

With so many Saints living in the Kanesville vicinity or passing through for six years, it is probable that the burial ground on a hill north of the Council Bluffs business district contains more Latter-day Saint graves than does the Winter Quarters cemetery across the river. In today's Fairview Cemetery, the high east end is where the Latter-day Saint graves were. No markers from the Kanesville period have survived. Hundreds of Saints were buried there.

When Mary McKenzie, age 34, died in Kanesville on 22 August 1850, her death prompted this poem to be published in the *Frontier Guardian*:

Mary sleep on and now take your rest,
May your swift spirit find ease and with the rest of the blest,
Your troubles were great and your labors too,
In serving the Lord since you left Nauvoo.[28]

A Latter-day Saint visitor to the cemetery in 1876 said the Latter-day Saint section contained no carved headstones dating before 1850 because the elements had obliterated any inscriptions on earlier headstones.[29]



MAP USED BY PERMISSION OF THE GALE GROUP; COMPASS PHOTO © PHOTOSPIN

Flooded by Gold Seekers (1849)

In January 1848, gold was discovered in California, launching the famous stampede of gold seekers to California in 1849. For outfitting gold seekers, Kanesville vied for preeminence with St. Joseph and Independence. These men swarmed into Kanesville, practically buying out the Latter-day Saint settlements' wagons, draw animals, supplies, and food. Shortages sent prices skyrocketing, benefiting sellers but pricing many Saints out of being able to afford to head west that famous first year of the gold rush. One estimate said that even with new ferries the Saints built in 1849, some 5,000 wagons of gold seekers in 1850 had to wait weeks for their turns to cross the river.[30] Kanesville's economy boomed.

Gold seekers brought into Kanesville a scene of vices and virtues. But some travelers heading west became exposed to the gospel and liked it. When the John Harris family reached Kanesville on their way to Oregon, they stopped near Bishop Joseph Knight's place. John Harris was ill. Prompted that the Harrises needed help, Bishop Knight recruited another brother and visited them. They blessed the man, who was instantly healed. Impressed, the family converted and went to Utah with a Latter-day Saint wagon train.[31]

Below: A drawing shows a camp area on the Elkhorn River. Inset: A California gold miner's pan of gold. Far right: Saints leaving Kanesville, Iowa, in 1852.

Kanesville's primary reason for being was to help Saints get to Utah. From 1848 to 1852 an estimated 46 Latter-day Saint wagon trains left, involving about 2,900 wagons and more than 25,000 Latter-day Saints.[32]

The Pottawattamie High Council vowed to "spare no pains to further, by all available means in their power, the emigration to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake."[33] Elder Hyde reported on 12 June 1850, "We have attended the organization of 350 wagons of Salt Lake emigrants."[34] Because cholera was so rampant that year—reports said 60 Saints had died from it while crossing Nebraska—the branches in Pottawattamie County observed 14 July as a day of fasting and prayer.

Stopover for Utahns Heading East

Kanesville was a transfer point for missionaries and Church leaders from the Utah Territory going east to "the States" or abroad to their fields of labor. The first band of missionaries ever sent out from Utah made a stopover in December 1849. Local Saints held "many parties and entertainments for us," missionary Job Smith said, the proceeds paying for the missionaries' passages to St. Louis.[35]

Closing Down Kanesville and Iowa LDS Settlements (1852)

In April 1852, six years after Thomas L. Kane described the encampment that became Kanesville, the

following description of the same area appeared in the local newspaper: "It is a fine, flourishing town, and contains about 300 houses; 16 mercantile establishments; 2 drug stores; 2 printing offices; 5 hotels; 4 groceries; 2 jewelers shops; 1 harness maker; 8 wagon shops; 2 tinsmiths; 2 livery stables; 2 cabinet shops; 5 boot and shoe makers; 2 daguerrean rooms; 5 practical physicians; 9 attorneys at law; 1 gunsmith; 1 cooper; several ministers of different denominations; 3 barber shops; 4 bakeries; 1 mill; 7 blacksmith shops; and about 1,000 to 1,500 inhabitants."[36]

Kanesville had become a thriving community; thus many Saints were getting "too" comfortable. But Kanesville and its surrounding Latter-day Saint settlements were never meant to be permanent. They were only to serve as stopover and recruitment places. "Abandonment, not establishment, was the watchword."[37] So, in an epistle dated 21 September 1851, the First Presidency instructed "all the Saints in Pottawattamie" to come to Utah the next season "and fail not. . . . What are you waiting for? Have you any good excuse for not coming? No! . . . We wish you to evacuate Pottawattamie, and the States, and next fall be with us." Those who make the sacrifice "shall be blessed."[38] In response, during 1852 the Saints pulled out of Kanesville and western Iowa and formed into a massive stream of emigrants flowing to Utah.

The next year, 1853, the locals renamed the city Council Bluffs.[39] "The natural influx of Gentiles," a county history states, "so changed matters that its character as a Latter-day Saint community was lost forever. . . . Whether this change was morally beneficial is debatable. Under the old dispensation the saloon, gambling and bawdy house were not tolerated, but now blossomed out in full vigor, and . . . the city was what would now be called a wide-open town."[40]

Other outfitting places for Saints heading west replaced Kanesville in subsequent years, and wagon train migration continued until 1868. In today's Council Bluffs, several historic markers, along with the replicated log tabernacle and a main street called Kanesville Boulevard, remind us of the vital roles Kanesville once played in the epic story of the Saints' efforts to gather to Zion in the Rocky Mountains. □

NOTES

1. *The Mormons: A Discourse Delivered before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 26 Mar. 1850* (1850), 25–26.
2. See Gail George Holmes, "The LDS Legacy of Southwestern Iowa," *Ensign,* Aug. 1999, 44–47.
3. Journal of Reddick Allred, 19 Dec. 1847, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter Church Archives).
4. See Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 4 Dec. 1847.
5. Quoted in Myrtle Hyde, *Orson Hyde: The Olive Branch of Israel* (2000), 221–22.
6. Quoted in B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church,* 3:316–317.
7. See Lynn Robert Webb, "The Contributions of the Temporary Settlements Garden Grove, Mount Pisgah, and Kanesville, Iowa, to Mormon Emigration, 1846–1852" (Brigham Young University thesis, 1954), 120.
8. See Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church,* 3:317–18.
9. See Journal History, 16 Jan. 1848.
10. Journal of Horace K. Whitney, typescript, 12 July 1846, Church Archives.
11. See *Frontier Guardian,* 19 Sept. and 31 Oct. 1849, and Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852* (1987), 219.
12. See Statistical View of the United States . . . Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census [1850] (Washington, D.C.: Supt. of the United States Census, 1854); Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri,* 217; Gail George Holmes, "LDS Heritage Tour," brochure.
13. *Frontier Guardian,* 25 Dec. 1850.
14. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri,* 216–17.
15. See *Frontier Guardian,* 31 Oct. 1851.
16. See report of semiannual conference at Kanesville on 6 Oct. 1850 in *Frontier Guardian,* 30 Oct. 1850.
17. Winter Quarters, Municipal High Council Minutes, typescript, 31 Jan. 1847, Church Archives.
18. "Conference," *Frontier Guardian,* 20 Feb. 1850.
19. *Frontier Guardian,* 11 Dec. 1850 and 21 Feb. 1851.
20. Journal History, 26 Nov. and 3 Dec. 1846.
21. Winter Quarters Municipal High Council Minutes, 7 Jan. 1847, Church Archives.
22. Orson Hyde to Orson Pratt, 11 Dec. 1848, copied into Journal History of that date; Myrtle Hyde, *Orson Hyde,* 234–36.
23. Quoted in Myrtle Hyde, *Orson Hyde,* 234.
24. Orson Hyde to Orson Pratt, 24 June 1849, Journal History, 24 June 1849.
25. *Frontier Guardian,* 11 Dec. 1850; Samuel Clark, comp., "Dollar Calculations Information Sheet," 5-page task paper, copy in author's possession.
26. First General Epistle of the First Presidency, 22 June 1849, in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* 6 vols. (1965–75), 1:355.
27. *Frontier Guardian,* 24 July 1850.
28. "Died," *Frontier Guardian,* 4 Sept. 1850.
29. James A. Little, *From Kirtland to Salt Lake City* (1890), 254–55.
30. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri,* 222.
31. See Zilla Mattice, "History of John Harris," photocopy of typescript, in possession of Joyce Gale, Beaver, Utah.
32. Stanley B. Kimball, *Historic Resource Study: Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail* (1991), 134–41.
33. "High Council," *Frontier Guardian,* 20 Feb. 1850.
34. "Emigration," *Frontier Guardian,* 12 June 1850.
35. Journal History, 11 Dec. 1849.
36. *Frontier Guardian,* 15 Apr. 1852.
37. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri,* 215.
38. *Frontier Guardian,* 14 Nov. 1851.
39. See Holmes, *Ensign,* Aug. 1999, 44–47.
40. *History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa* (1883), 1:10.

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THE MANTLE OF Elijah

The story of the transfer of prophetic authority from Elijah to Elisha provides a model for how Church callings are passed from one person to another.

By Bruce L. Andreason

Imagine your bishop, stake president, or other Church leader has just been released. In the space of just a few moments, you have raised your hand twice, once to express gratitude and once to sustain a new leader. During such a time it is common to experience some sadness as well as anxiety. What will the new leader be like? What changes are likely to come? Some youth and children may wonder if they will like their new leader as much as the previous one.

The prophet Elisha and an Old Testament group known as "the sons of the prophets" (see Bible Dictionary, "Schools of the Prophets," 770) experienced a similar situation. The story of how the mantle of prophetic authority was passed from Elijah to Elisha offers helpful counsel when the Lord releases one Church leader and calls a new one.

A New Leader Is Prepared

No danger or duty was too severe to shake the confidence of the prophet Elijah. "His recorded words are few but forceful, and his deeds are explicit evidences of his strength of will, force of character, and personal courage" (Bible Dictionary, "Elijah," 664). Perhaps you have known a bishop, stake president, or other Church leader much like Elijah.

Some six or seven years before the end of Elijah's mortal ministry, the Lord revealed to him that Elisha would be his successor (see 1 Kgs. 19:16). So Elijah went to meet him and found Elisha plowing a field. Elijah approached him and threw his mantle (cloak) over Elisha's shoulders, signifying Elisha's call to be his attendant and disciple. Elisha then kissed his parents good-bye, gave away all he owned, and "arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him" (see 1 Kgs. 19:19–21).

Elisha served and matured spiritually under Elijah's direction through several major events. First, Elijah confronted King Ahab and Queen Jezebel and reproved them for the murder of Naboth (see 1 Kgs. 21:1–29). Then Elijah twice called down fire from heaven to consume 50 soldiers sent by the king to arrest him (see 2 Kgs. 1:1–12). Finally, Elijah rebuked Ahab's son King Ahaziah for seeking counsel from false gods, prophesying of Ahaziah's imminent death (see 2 Kgs. 1:13–17). Elisha was an eyewitness to the power of Elijah's priesthood keys. In like manner we can be assured that the Lord is preparing mighty leaders today to move His latter-day kingdom forward through their service to the Master, Jesus Christ.

The Mantle Is Passed

Chapter 2 of 2 Kings records the final dramatic events of Elijah's mortal ministry. Elijah set out on a journey with Elisha from Gilgal to Bethel, then from Bethel to Jericho, and finally from Jericho across the Jordan River (see Bible Map 4). At each place Elijah directed his faithful disciple, "Tarry here, I pray thee" (2 Kgs. 2:2, 4, 6). But each time Elisha refused to leave his master's side. He was determined to follow his leader until the very end of his ministry.

At each stopping place, Elisha was questioned by the sons of the prophets, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today?" (2 Kgs. 2:3, 5). Elisha's simple reply each time was, "Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace."

Elisha's loyalty to Elijah and his response to the

Elijah Ascending into Heaven, by William Henry Margetson

As a chariot with horses of fire swept Elijah toward heaven, he dropped his well-worn cloak to his faithful follower, Elisha.

sons of the prophets reminds us of the importance of sustaining our leaders right up to the time they are formally released, even when we know this may be soon.

As Elijah and Elisha approached the banks of the Jordan River, Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water with it. Then something occurred that hadn't happened since the days of Joshua over 450 years before: the water "divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground" (2 Kgs. 2:8; see also Josh. 3:14–17). This was witnessed by 50 of the sons of the prophets.

Once across the river, Elijah and Elisha continued their journey. Elijah asked his student-prophet what he would desire of him before his departure. "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me," Elisha replied (2 Kgs. 2:9). The term *double portion* refers to Elisha's desire for the special inheritance that belongs to the worthy firstborn male in a family (see Bible Dictionary, "Firstborn," 675). Elijah deferred the granting of this request to the will of the Lord, saying, "If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee" (2 Kgs. 2:10).

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT BARRETT

Approaching the Jordan River, Elisha struck the water as Elijah had and walked through again on dry ground.

They continued to walk and talk, when suddenly a chariot with horses of fire descended from heaven, sweeping Elijah up off the ground toward heaven in a whirlwind. As they parted Elisha cried out, "My father, my father!" Elijah then dropped his well-worn cloak to his faithful follower. When Elijah had disappeared from view, Elisha was overcome with grief, tearing apart his own outer garment (see 2 Kgs. 2:12). The sense of sadness over the release of a leader is often felt deeply by those who have been most affected by the leader's ministry.

Taking Elijah's cloak, Elisha began the journey back to Jericho. When he approached the Jordan River, he struck the water as Elijah had and walked through again on dry ground. Witnessing this, the sons of the prophets who had seen the earlier miracle of parting the water exclaimed, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha," and paid appropriate respect to their newly chosen leader (see 2 Kgs. 2:15). When we sustain a new leader, it is our privilege to pray and come to know by revelation that those who have been called to lead us have indeed received authority from God.

Elisha's ministry lasted more than 50 years and presents similarities and differences to that of his master. Elijah's mission brought word of the Lord's judgment upon Israel's wicked kings, while Elisha's ministry was primarily that of a supportive adviser to well-intentioned kings. Both men were healers; both were men of many mighty miracles, of kindness, and of mercy.

When a newly called leader comes into our lives, we need to recognize that no two leaders or their ministries are the same. Yet they have one thing in common: they each are expected to bring all that they are and have to the altar of God and offer it for the benefit and blessing of those over whom they preside.

Sustaining Our New Leaders

Members of the Lord's Church in every dispensation have been asked to sustain new leaders who have been called to replace loved and trusted ones. President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) has said, "The measure of your true conversion . . . is whether or not you are so living that you see the power of God resting upon the leaders of this church and that testimony goes down into your heart like fire."[1]

The Lord has given us the course we are to follow, one faithfully marked by His ordained prophets. The Lord has also given us leaders in our wards, branches, and stakes. When we raise our hands to sustain them, we are solemnly promising to uphold them by our faith and prayers (see D&C 26:2). The Lord richly blesses those who are true to the mantle of authority He gives His servants.

President James E. Faust of the First Presidency has said, "In my lifetime, there have been very few occasions when I questioned the wisdom and inspiration given by key priesthood leaders. I have always tried to follow their counsel, whether I agreed with it or not. I have come to know that most of the time they were in tune with the Spirit and I was not. The safe course is to sustain our priesthood leaders and let God judge their actions."[2]

Like the sons of the prophets in Elisha's day, we may seek and obtain the reassuring comfort of the Holy Ghost as a witness that we are led by a living prophet and local leaders who have received the Lord's mantle of authority. We may assuredly know that the spirit of the Lord "doth rest" upon the new one. □

NOTES

1. *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee,* ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 520.
2. "Power of the Priesthood," *Ensign,* May 1997, 42.

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More on this topic: See Robert D. Hales, "The Mantle of a Bishop," Ensign, *May 1985, 28–30; Howard W. Hunter, "Elijah the Prophet,"* Ensign, *Dec. 1971, 70–72.*

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL MANN

Naaman and Gehazi

A CONTRAST IN OBEDIENCE

An army commander and a prophet's servant struggle with physical and spiritual leprosy.

By Elder Ralph W. Hardy Jr.
Area Authority Seventy

During my 11th-grade year at a private high school, I took a class titled "Religion and Western Culture." I received an assignment from our instructor, who was also the school's popular chaplain, to write a credo—a concise, thematic statement of my beliefs on religious or spiritual matters.

At first I thought it was a daunting assignment. I then reflected on the many lessons I had learned as a youthful member of the Church—lessons mostly absorbed within the walls of my own home. Thoughts and concepts flooded my mind. I went to my scriptures and began thumbing through the pages and making an outline. Soon I began to type, page after page, my baseline beliefs: the Godhead, the great council and war in heaven, the Fall, the need for a Savior, Jesus' ministry, His Atonement and literal Resurrection, the great Apostasy, the Restoration, eternal marriage, the three degrees of glory, tithing, and the Word of Wisdom. For me it was all there. I quickly proofed the paper and turned it in. A few weeks later I was pleased to receive it back with an A grade, but also with a notation from the chaplain: "Ralph, please see me."

The chaplain greeted me and asked that I sit down. He then told me that in all his experience of giving this assignment to high school boys, he had never read a statement of theological doctrine so complete, and he wondered how I came to write such a paper. I responded that this was what I had been taught in my home and at church from the time I was a small boy. The chaplain was my friend until the day I graduated.

I believe most young Latter-day Saints today, if asked, would be able to express in like fashion what they believe to be true and would be able to say that they are living what they believe. Unfortunately, however, too many have experienced the serious

consequences of failing to be true to what they know is right.

The contrasting Old Testament stories of Naaman (nay-AH-man) and Elisha's servant Gehazi (guh-HAY-zhigh) illustrate the importance of understanding the Lord's will and then doing it. These Bible narratives also point out what can happen when our actions are inconsistent with what we know is true.

Naaman the Syrian

The nation of Syria, located mostly north of Israel, first came under the rule of the children of Israel in the days of King David. When his son King Solomon died and Israel was split into two kingdoms, Syria rebelled, thus initiating about 100 years of tense political relations. Open warfare often flared between the Syrian kings (Ben-hadad, Hazael, Ben-hadad II, Rezin) and the kings of Israel (Ahab, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II). Between these two nations, however, there also existed periods of official peace, interspersed with occasional skirmishes.

Naaman humbled himself, did strictly as he had been commanded, and was healed.

Thus, when a letter from the king of Syria (probably Ben-hadad II) arrived for Jehoram, king of Israel, there was great concern. Accompanying the letter was a huge amount of silver and gold, and 10 sets of clothing (see 2 Kgs. 5:5–7). Delivering it all was a man named Naaman, "captain of the host of the king of Syria." He was a "great man with his master [the king], and honourable . . . : he was also a mighty man in valour" (2 Kgs. 5:1). The presence of such a man in Jehoram's court must have stirred not only fear but pity, for Naaman was a leper. His face most likely had reddish lesions, a few knoblike swellings, and open sores. How miserable he must have looked!

Naaman was also suffering from a form of spiritual leprosy: ignorance of the true and living God and His commandments, for Syrians were worshipers of the false god Rimmon (see Bible Dictionary, "Rimmon," 763) and had built a temple to his name at Damascus (see 2 Kgs. 5:18).

Naaman Learns What to Do

In Naaman's home in Syria was a "little maid" taken captive out of the land of Israel during one of the military campaigns. She was a servant to Naaman's wife, and it was her simple expression of faith to her mistress that had led Naaman to Israel's king. She had said, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy" (2 Kgs. 5:3).

King Jehoram sent Naaman to the prophet Elisha to be cleansed of his leprosy. To Naaman's pleading, Elisha said through his servant, Gehazi, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean" (2 Kgs. 5:10). Although it seemed like an unusual command, it was a clear instruction from the prophet of God. The mighty Naaman was taken aback and confused. He had anticipated that the Israelite prophet would work a miracle on the spot—calling on the name of the Lord and, in a sweeping demonstration of great power, "strike his hand over the place" to cure his leprosy (2 Kgs. 5:11). He became upset and in a fit of anger stormed away from Elisha's house.

Naaman Obeys

Naaman's servants were the first to exercise faith in the words of the prophet. To their captain they reasoned: If the Lord's prophet had told him to do "some great thing," wouldn't he have done it? How much easier, therefore, to do a small or simple thing, like bathing in the river Jordan? (see 2 Kgs. 5:13). The now humbled Naaman accepted his enlightened servants' advice and, in an act of great faith, chose to obey. "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (2 Kgs. 5:14). Returning to Elisha with his retinue of soldiers and servants, Naaman joined his testimony with that of the little Israelite maid: "Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel" (2 Kgs. 5:15). With his physical leprosy gone, Naaman was also healed of his spiritual leprosy by an awakening of faith in the true God.

Gehazi the Servant

Gehazi was Elisha's trusted representative and messenger who had been with him for several years. Gehazi knew Elisha was a prophet of the one true God. He had personally witnessed God's power in the miraculous raising of the Shunammite woman's son from the dead (see 2 Kgs. 4:8–37), the neutralizing of poison in a vegetable soup (see 2 Kgs. 4:38–41), and the feeding of 100 men with but 20 loaves of bread (see 2 Kgs. 4:42–44). If anyone should have known and obeyed the commandments of God, it was Gehazi.

When a joyful Naaman stood before Gehazi and

Elisha, with skin clean and pure, Naaman pleaded, "Take a blessing [gift] of thy servant." But despite repeated urgings, Elisha replied, "I will receive none," and Naaman departed (1 Kgs. 15:15–16).

After he had traveled some distance, Naaman noticed Gehazi running to catch up with him. Naaman got down from his chariot and went forth to meet him, saying, "Is all well?" Gehazi then said what he surely knew in his own heart was a lie: He told Naaman that Elisha had sent him to get some money and clothing for two destitute young men who had just arrived (see 2 Kgs. 5:21–22). Naaman was pleased with the request; he wanted to do something for the Lord and Elisha. He gave generously, even more than was asked, sending two servants to help Gehazi carry the goods back. As they arrived in sight of Elisha's home, Gehazi dismissed the servants and hid the goods in his house.

Soon the servant stood before his master, who asked where he had been. Gehazi replied that he had not gone anywhere, compounding his deception. Elisha then revealed his divinely given knowledge of Gehazi's lies. And for Gehazi's disobedience, Elisha cursed him: "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee. . . . And [Gehazi] went out from his presence a leper as white as snow" (2 Kgs. 5:27).

Strict Obedience

Latter-day Saints know, as a people, what the Lord's commandments are and, as never before, are able to hear them from apostles and prophets. We must listen to them. The commandments are relatively easy to understand and simple to follow if we are prepared to accept them with a childlike faith.

Elisha did not ask Naaman to do "some great thing." What was required? To humble himself and do strictly as he had been commanded. We are required to do the same. The Lord's commands are clear, uncomplicated, and in many instances "adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints" (D&C 89:3). The Lord will prepare a way for us to keep all of His commandments, even when they seem difficult. The words of a favorite hymn are instructive:

How gentle God's commands!
How kind his precepts are!
("How Gentle God's Commands," *Hymns,* no. 125)

Jesus said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt 11:30). By contrast, sin brings misery and leaves us in captivity to Satan. To take upon ourselves the yoke and burden of the Savior, we must exercise faith in Him—even if we can just "exercise a particle of faith" (Alma 32:27). Then, in strict obedience, we must transfer the power of this faith into the habit of keeping the Lord's commandments.

Naaman and Gehazi both discovered, each in his own way, that strict obedience to the Lord's commands is the only way to avoid spiritual leprosy. As Latter-day Saints we have the correct prescription for happiness: "obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel" (A of F 1:3). □

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More on this topic: James E. Faust, "Some Great Thing," Ensign, *Nov. 2001, 46–49; Waldo P. Call, "Follow the Prophets,"* Ensign, *Nov. 1990, 82–83.*

Gehazi lied when he told Naaman that Elisha had sent him for money and clothing.

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH'S USE OF THE Old Testament

By Grant Underwood

Church members in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith were a Bible-oriented people. Their heroes were as likely to be Abraham, Moses, and Joshua as Alma and Captain Moroni. And phrases such as "to your tents, O Israel" (1 Kgs. 12:16) tended to fall more freely from their lips than "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). This was due in part to the fact that the United States of the Prophet's day was a society immersed in the study and teaching of the Bible. The imagery and vocabulary of the King James Version were often echoed in the speeches and writing of the period.

It is not surprising therefore that the Lord—who speaks to His servants through heavenly messengers and tutors them "after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding" (D&C 1:24)—inspired His latter-day prophet to communicate in the religious expressions of the Bible.

The Prophet Joseph Smith's use of the Old Testament is a prime example of how early Latter-day Saints relied on this book of scripture. An examination of the major published collections of his teachings yields more than 400 references to the Old Testament. The top chart on page 32 identifies the Old Testament books most frequently quoted or alluded to in his speeches and writings.

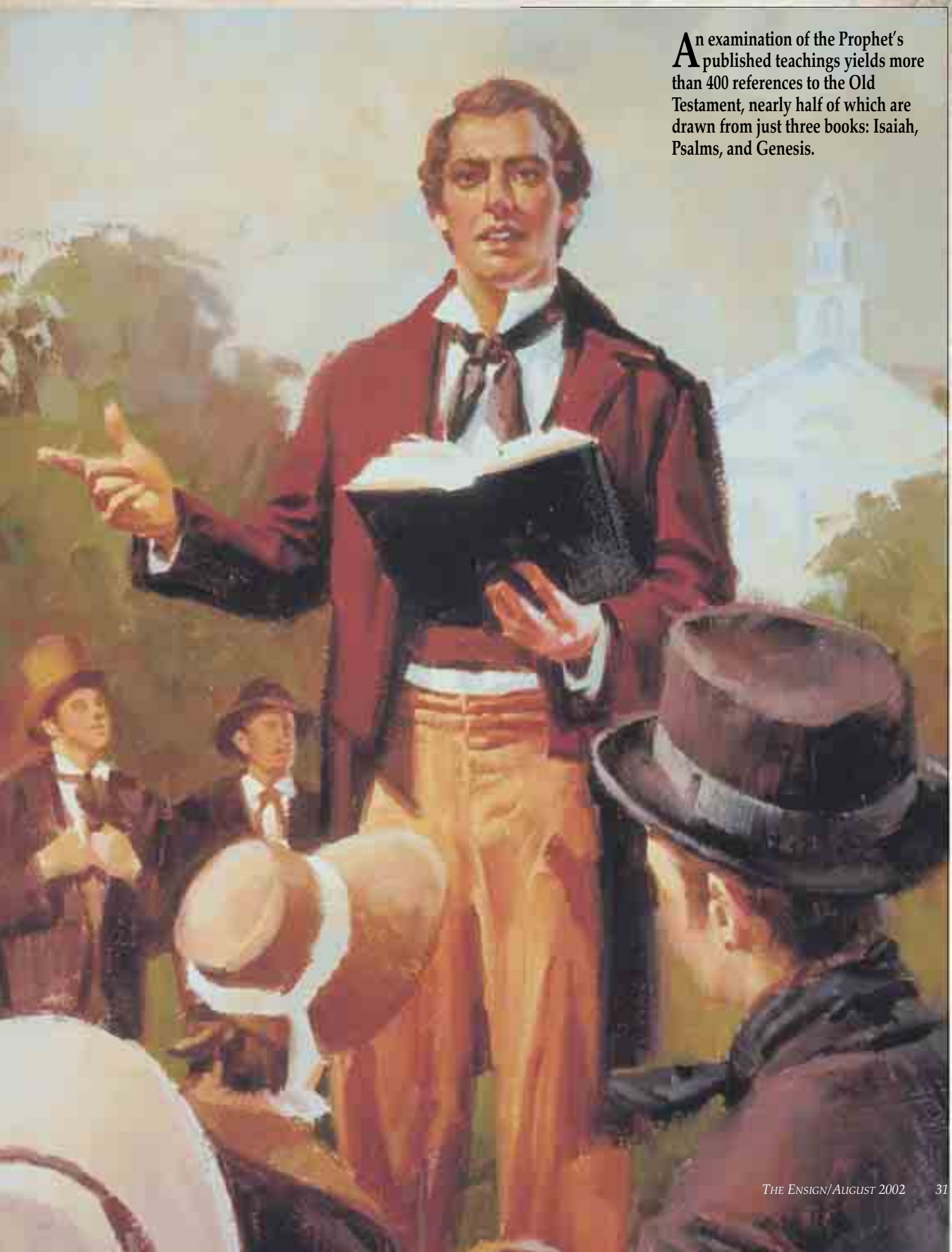
More than 200 references, or nearly half the total number, are drawn from just three books: Isaiah, Psalms, and Genesis. Despite this clustering, it is noteworthy that only 6 of the 39 books in the Old Testament are not found in his words, suggesting that the Prophet was well acquainted with the entire Old Testament.

The bottom chart on page 32 lists passages repeated more than once in his teachings.

These two charts provide a general sense of what parts of the Old Testament the Prophet was inspired to use and offer a context for us to examine how he understood the book. The Prophet primarily used the Old Testament to:

1. "Liken" or draw comparisons between events in his day and events in the Bible.
2. Affirm the literal meaning of its stories.
3. Enrich his ordinary language by freely incorporating its phrases.
4. Shed new light on the meaning of its many difficult passages.

INSET: *JOSEPH SMITH SEEKS WISDOM*, BY DALE KILBOURN; RIGHT: PAINTING BY SAM LAWLOR



An examination of the Prophet's published teachings yields more than 400 references to the Old Testament, nearly half of which are drawn from just three books: Isaiah, Psalms, and Genesis.

Old Testament Books Most Frequently Quoted

Old Testament Book	Number of References	Percent of References
Isaiah	99	24
Psalms	58	14
Genesis	57	14
Exodus	25	6
Malachi	24	6
Daniel	21	5
Deuteronomy	17	4
Jeremiah	16	4
Job	13	3
Zechariah	10	2
Proverbs	9	2

Likening Old Testament Stories to His Time

The Prophet saw biblical action as being similar to what was happening in his lifetime but with different characters and settings. For example, immediately after learning of the Saints' expulsion from Jackson County in 1833, the Prophet wrote: "All Pharaoh's host, or in other words, all hell and the combined powers of earth are marshalling their forces to overthrow us. And we [are] like the children of Israel with the Red Sea before them and the Egyptians ready to fall upon them to destroy them, and no arm could deliver but the arm of God. And this is the case with us."[1]

Several years later and shortly after his incarceration in Liberty Jail, Joseph comforted the scattered Saints with these words: "Those who bear false witness against us do seem to have a great triumph over us for the present. But we want you to remember Haman and Mordecai. You know that Haman could not be satisfied so long as he saw Mordecai at the king's gate, and he sought the life of Mordecai and the people of the Jews. But the Lord so ordered that Haman was hanged upon his own gallows. So shall it come to pass with poor Haman in the last days. . . . I say unto you that those who have thus vilely treated us like Haman shall be hanged upon their own gallows, or in other words, shall fall."[2]

Old Testament Passage	Number of Times Used
Malachi 4:5–6	9
Isaiah 29:21	6
Isaiah 51:3 or 58:12	6
Obadiah 1:21	5
Genesis 1:26–27	4
Isaiah 2:2–3	4
Daniel 2:44	4
Daniel 7:9–10, 13–14	4

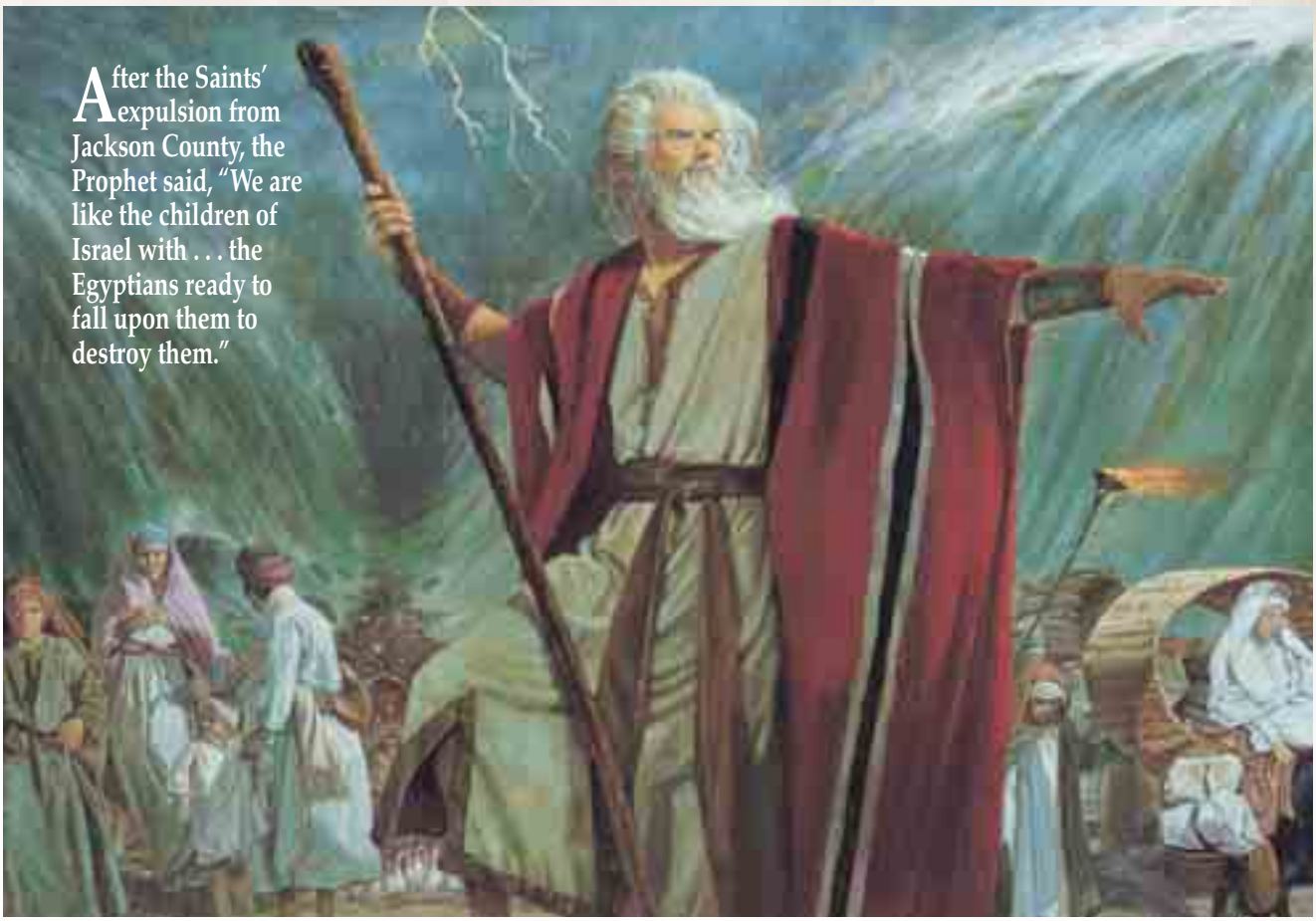
The Prophet also used examples of ancient Israel's backsliding to teach that dissension within the modern Church was not a sign of its imminent collapse; rather, it was an indication of its divinity. When he received a particularly cutting reproof from certain brethren in Missouri, Joseph recited the story of how the Israelites worshiped the golden calf while Moses was on the mount. He then asked his supporters, "Therefore, I say, if we should suffer perils among false brethren, should it be accounted a strange thing?"[3]

He linked episodes of apostasy during Israel's 40 years in the wilderness to disaffections among his associates. In the aftermath of the extermination order issued by Governor Boggs to expel the Saints from Missouri, Joseph wrote that the dissenters who aided and abetted the mobbers, "like Balaam being greedy for a reward, sold us into the hands of those who loved them, for the world loves his own."[4] Singling out W. W. Phelps, the Prophet continued: "This poor man who professes to be much of a prophet has no other dumb ass to ride but David Whitmer to forbid his madness when he goes up to curse Israel. And this ass not being of the same kind of Balaam's, therefore the angel notwithstanding appeared unto him. Yet he could not penetrate his understanding sufficiently, so but what he brays out cursings instead of blessings."[5] Referring to all apostates, he also remarked, "We classify them in the error of Balaam and in the gainsaying of Core [Korah]."[6]

The Prophet once compared the dissenting W. W. Phelps to Baalam.

Later, when Phelps repented and wished to return to the fold, the Prophet freely forgave him in the words of the couplet, "Come on, dear brother, since the war is past, for friends at first are friends again at last."[7] However, the Prophet also wanted to convey to him the seriousness of what he had done by likening it to Obadiah 1:11–12: "In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day when strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates and cast lots upon Far West [Obadiah 1:11 reads "Jerusalem"], even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress."[8]

The Prophet also used Old Testament stories as



After the Saints' expulsion from Jackson County, the Prophet said, "We are like the children of Israel with . . . the Egyptians ready to fall upon them to destroy them."

MOSES PARTING THE RED SEA, BY ROBERT BARRETT

compelling models of behavior to instruct his brethren. When John E. Page abandoned Orson Hyde on a mission to the Middle East and the case was brought before the Church, Joseph Smith explained that the problem was that they did not follow biblical precedent. He said, "No two men when they [have] agreed to go together ought to separate," and he quoted the circumstance when Elisha "clung to [Elijah's] garment until Elijah was taken to heaven" (see 2 Kgs. 2) and said that "Elder Page should have stuck by Elder Hyde."[9]

Affirming Its Literal Meaning

The Prophet Joseph Smith believed in a rigorous adherence to the literal meaning of the biblical text. "What is the rule of interpretation?" he asked. "Just no interpretation at all." It should be "understood precisely as it reads."[10]

An example of this was his use of Amos 3:7 to refute speculation about the date of the Second Coming. In the early 1840s, Baptist William Miller stirred considerable national interest with his prediction that the Second Coming would occur in 1843. When one of Miller's followers claimed to have seen the "sign of the Son of Man" as predicted in Matthew 24, Joseph replied: "He has not seen the sign of the Son of Man, as foretold by Jesus; neither has any man . . . for the Lord hath not shown me any such sign; and as the prophet saith, so it must be—'Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.' (See Amos 3:7.) Therefore hear this, O earth: The Lord will not come to reign over the righteous, in this world, in 1843, nor until everything for the Bridegroom is ready."[11] Of the Savior's words that no man knows the day or the hour of the coming of the Son of Man (see Matt. 24:36), the Prophet asked: "Did Christ speak this as a general principle throughout all generations? Oh, no, He spoke in the present tense. No man that was then living upon the footstool of God knew the day or the hour. But He did not say that there was no man throughout all generations that should not know the day or the hour. No, for this would be in flat contradiction with other scripture. For the prophet says that God will do nothing but what He will reveal unto His servants the prophets. Consequently, if it is not made known to the prophets, it will not come to pass."[12]

Such literalism prepared the Prophet's mind for inspiration from heaven. William P. McIntire recalled the Prophet's words at a Nauvoo Lyceum lecture in the

winter of 1841: "Joseph said in answer to Mr. Stout that Adam did not commit sin in eating the fruits, for God had decreed that he should eat and fall. But in compliance with the decree [see Gen. 2:17] he should die. Only he should die was the saying of the Lord; therefore, the Lord appointed us to fall and also redeemed us."[13] On this occasion the Prophet Joseph offered the inspired meaning of the scriptural phrase "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" as a decree rather than as a warning. Since Mr. Stout apparently took it the more traditional way, Joseph felt the need to correct him.

The Prophet was inspired to find support for the doctrine of a premortal existence in the Lord's question to Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:4). The Prophet Joseph reasoned that this verse was "evidence that Job was in existence somewhere at that time."[14] Another inspired literal interpretation that has had a far-reaching effect on our doctrine is the Prophet's reading of Isaiah 2:3: "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." He taught that the words *Zion* and *Jerusalem,* rather than being an example of Hebrew poetic parallelism, which would make the terms synonymous, referred to two different places, suggesting that nearly every mention of Zion in Old Testament prophecy points toward the New Jerusalem to be built in America.

Enriching His Ordinary Language

The cadences of the King James Version were a profound part of the Prophet's "manner of language" (see D&C 1:24). Nearly 75 percent of his more than 400 references to the Old Testament fall into this category. He rarely quoted, with exactness, a complete passage; almost always it was a single striking phrase or a brief figure of speech. Those not intimately familiar with the Old Testament might not recognize that many of his expressions are biblical. A sampling of phrases he used in his prose includes "perverse and crooked generation" (Deut. 32:5), "bind up the testimony, seal the law" (Isa. 8:16), "weighed in the balance" (see Dan. 5:27), "furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10), and "broken heart" and "contrite spirit" (Psalms 34:18).

On several occasions, Joseph remarked from Proverbs 25:11 that the words from a friend were "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."[15] He once described a man as having a heart as hard as the nether millstone,[16] a simile borrowed from Job 41:24. Another time he prayed that his efforts to expose the sins of certain of his enemies would be "like a nail in a sure place, driven by the master of assemblies,"[17] a metaphor drawn from Isaiah 22:23 and Ecclesiastes 12:11. Using a phrase from both Psalm 72:8 and Zechariah 9:10, he talked of spreading the light and truth of the everlasting gospel "from the rivers to the ends of the earth."[18]

Much of the imagery and phraseology he used when giving blessings also came from the Old Testament. The Prophet told Oliver Cowdery in an allusion to Genesis 9:12–17 that Oliver would "be made like unto the bow which the Lord hath set in the heavens; he shall be a sign."[19] Then borrowing a phrase from Isaiah, the Prophet told Oliver that he would also be "an ensign unto the nations."[20] In language reminiscent of Isaiah 49:2, he told Hyrum Smith that he would be "a shaft in the hand of his God . . . and he shall be hid by the hand of the Lord" and then promised him that "none of his secret parts shall be discovered unto his hurt" (see Isa. 3:17).[21]

One of the Old Testament passages he most frequently invoked in his day-to-day language was Isaiah 29:21, especially the phrase "make a man an offender for a word." After a debating-school scuffle with his brother William, Joseph wrote, "Duty binds us not to make each other offenders for a word."[22] The Prophet wrote in 1840 to Oliver Granger that he hoped "even in Kirtland, there are some who do not make a man an offender for a word."[23] In the final months before his death, he said that there were men "in our midst that are watching for iniquity and will make a man an offender for a word."[24] And in a detailed allusion, he wrote to the members of the Church scattered in Caldwell County, Missouri, that the problem mentioned in this passage was at the root of their Missouri problems: "The old prophet verily told the truth. We have no retraction to make. We have reproved in the gate, and men have laid snares for us. We have spoken words, and men have made us offenders; and notwithstanding all this, our minds are not darkened but feel strong in the Lord."[25]

Unlocking the Meaning

Another dimension of the Prophet's reliance on the Old Testament is manifest in the way the Lord worked through him to shed new light on various passages of

HE SPOKE THE TRUTH

"I have that absolute confidence in every vision, in every manifestation, in every revelation that has come to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith. I know he spoke the truth. . . . Everything has worked out harmoniously and according to the revelations we find in the Old Testament and in the New."

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972), "Joseph Smith's First Prayer," *Improvement Era*, June 1960, 401.

the Old Testament. The Joseph Smith Translation is the best example of this, but there is much more that can be found in his speeches and writings.

Several brief examples from the King Follett discourse serve to introduce this aspect of the Prophet's teaching. For example, we gain insight into the meaning of the phrase "image of God" in Genesis 1:27 by this inspired comment: "If you were to see [Heavenly Father] today, you would see Him in all the person, image, very form of man, for Adam was created in the very fashion of God."[26] In a second example, Joseph's revealed knowledge of the eternities led him to replace the word *create* in Genesis 1:1 with the more appropriate word *organize*, thus dismissing the idea of ex nihilo, or out-of-nothing, creation. The Prophet further clarified that the phrase "in the beginning God created" is better rendered, "the head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods."[27]

Learning from the Old Testament

The Prophet Joseph Smith had a masterful command of the Bible, particularly of the prophetic writings. As we contemplate this year's focus on the Old Testament in our gospel study, we can take Brother Joseph as our example of what it means to have a grasp of this book of scripture. He used it to liken its events to his time; he accepted it as historical fact; he freely incorporated its passages into his daily conversations; and his commentary on its many difficult passages continues to enlighten the Latter-day Saints today.

He once remarked, "God's own handwriting" is in this "sacred volume" and "he who reads it oftenest will like it best, and he who is acquainted with it, will know the hand wherever he can see it."[28] The Prophet Joseph intimately knew, and therefore deeply loved, the Old Testament. From it he learned, as we might, to discern the hand of God in his own life and in the events of God's latter-day kingdom. □

NOTES

1. *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith,* ed. Dean C. Jessee (1984), 285; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized throughout.
2. *Personal Writings,* 375.
3. *Personal Writings,* 317.
4. *Personal Writings,* 376.
5. *Personal Writings,* 376.
6. *Personal Writings,* 377.
7. *Personal Writings,* 473.
8. *Personal Writings,* 472–73.
9. *The Words of Joseph Smith,* ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (1980), 111; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized throughout.
10. *Words,* 161.
11. *History of the Church,* 5:291.
12. *Words,* 180–81.
13. *Words,* 63.
14. *Words,* 68.
15. *Personal Writings,* 94, 528.
16. *Personal Writings,* 570.
17. *Personal Writings,* 120.
18. *Personal Writings,* 139.
19. *Personal Writings,* 23.
20. *Personal Writings,* 23–24.
21. *Personal Writings,* 24.
22. *Personal Writings,* 114.
23. *Personal Writings,* 476.
24. *Words,* 325.
25. *Personal Writings,* 376.
26. *Words,* 357.
27. *Words,* 345.
28. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,* sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 56.

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Shedding new light on Isaiah 2:3, the Prophet taught that Zion in Old Testament prophecies points toward the New Jerusalem to be built in America.

ZION, BY GARY SMITH

Children of Divorce

Can you build a lasting marriage after seeing your parents' union come apart? The answer is yes—and gospel principles can teach you how.

By Elaine Walton

More and more we hear this sad lament: What do you do when an eternal marriage is the deep desire of your heart, but you have already witnessed the marriage most familiar to you—that of your parents—come apart? What you dream of is "exaltation and glory . . . sealed upon their heads" (D&C 132:19). But what you have seen is misery, anger, distrust, and emotional wreckage as your parents went through a breakup. Maybe it happened when you were so young you barely remember, or maybe it scarred your teenage years. Maybe it happened before you knew about the gospel, or maybe your parents were one of those couples sealed in the temple who somehow let "forever" slip away.

If *they* couldn't hold onto the dream, can *you* still attain a marriage relationship to endure "from everlasting to everlasting"? (D&C 132:20).

The answer is an emphatic "Yes!"

You may not realize just how much you have in your favor. As you incorporate gospel principles into your life, you will find they teach all the truths you need to build your own eternal marriage. When you look within yourself, you will find surprising strengths to meet the challenges that will come.

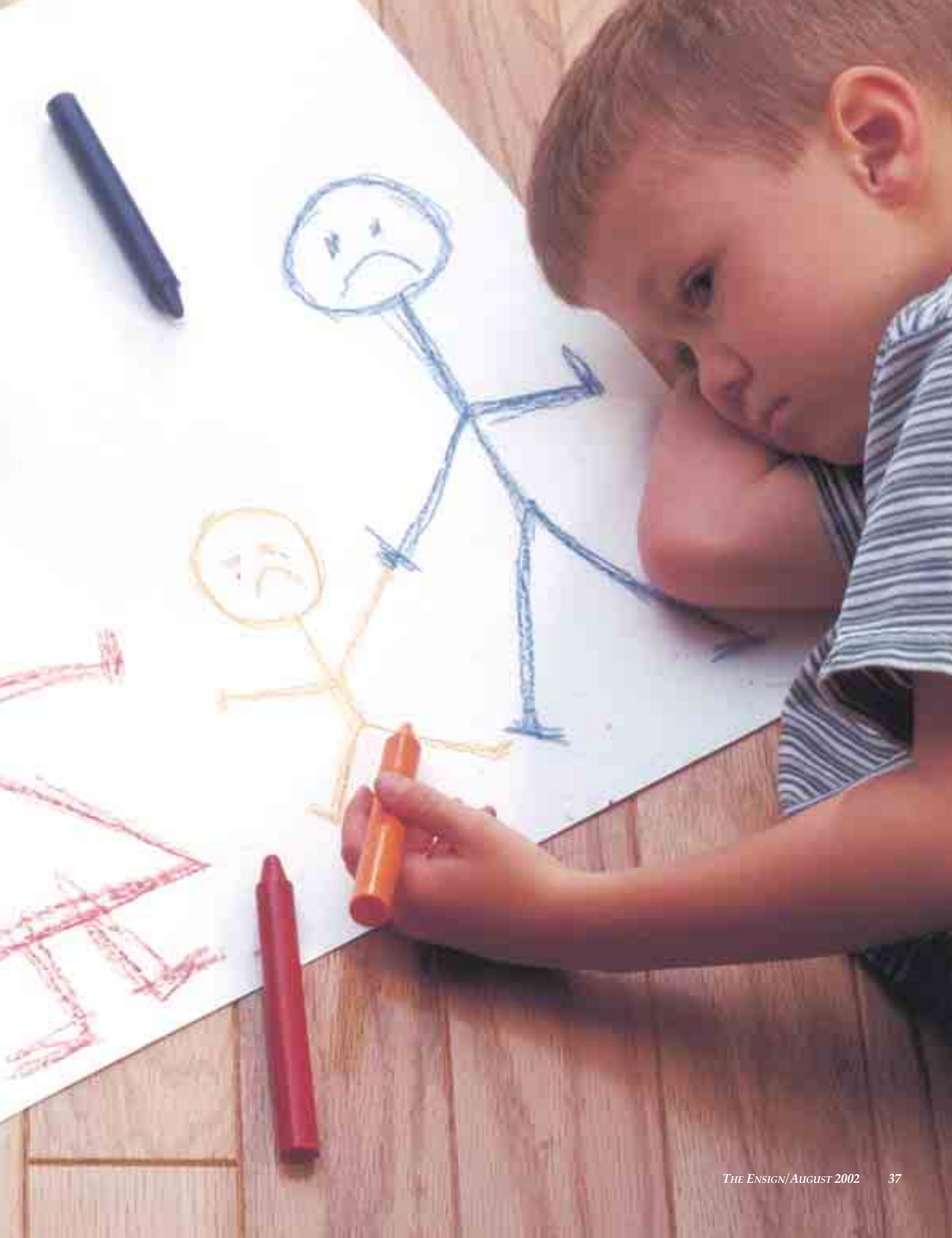
The Damage of Divorce

Research shows that children of divorced parents suffer in numerous ways, but one of the most profound effects is the impact on a child's later marriage. What children see and experience during the failing marriage of their parents can become part of their view of themselves and of society. As a divorced parent, I watched my children suffer and wondered at their chances for a happy marriage and family life. As a professional counselor and social work educator, I watch others struggle with this painful issue. Yet my testimony and my personal and professional experience teach me that the gospel can help children prevent the bitter experience of their parents from determining the outcome of their own lives. These children have great potential for happiness.

Often, however, children of divorced parents will have to overcome negative attitudes or behaviors they have developed in trying to cope with their parents' divorce.

Jennifer,[1] for example, is a 19-year-old college student, serious minded and determined to succeed. Her good grades often come at the expense of social life. She deflects attention from young men by telling them, "Dating is bad for my grades." She says she has good friends who are young men, and maybe one day she'll marry her best friend. In the meantime, she has goals to complete a graduate program, then serve a mission. Jennifer's confidence in the possibility of a happy marriage was shaken by her parents' divorce. For her, happiness means taking control of her life, being successful in school and a career, and keeping marriage in the distance.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT CASEY; POSED BY MODELS



Stephanie's parents were also divorced, but her response was different. Along with devastating loss, she felt a desperate need for reassurance. Premature and inappropriate intimacy with young men became a way to compensate for the loss and to prove to herself that relationships could be successful. After a series of heartbreaking romances, compromising her values in frantic attempts to feel loved, she finally saw the folly of selling herself short, but she felt alienated from the Church.

There are a number of reasons why people like Jennifer and Stephanie, children of divorced parents, might have difficulty later with their own marriages.

Trust and intimacy. Being disappointed by the two most important people in one's life (parents) sets us up to be disappointed by others. Children of divorce may even believe that people will pretend to love them but eventually will leave. At one level, this attitude denies the hope we are taught in the gospel.

Fear of repeating the mistake. Children of divorce may naturally fear that they will grow up to be too much like their parents in some ways. One student explained: "It took a long time for me to finally be OK with the idea that someday I could get married. I really don't want to make the same mistake my parents made."

Damaged sense of self-worth. "After my parents' divorce, I struggled to feel good about myself again. Because I felt disconnected from the love that had created and nurtured me, I was uncertain of who I really was," recalls one child of divorced parents.[2] Fragile feelings may be further damaged by the stigma attached to broken homes. Todd, a returned missionary and college student with a promising future, recently lamented to me that in the eyes of his girlfriend's parents, his own parents' divorce tainted him. For Todd, overcoming that hurdle will require both the strength to forgive others and the faith that sustains us when we know we are living as the Lord commanded (see D&C 121:45). It also would have been easier for Todd if his girlfriend's parents had valued him for who he was and not held him responsible for his parents' mistakes.

The Question of Eternity

Knowing the eternal nature of families may bring an added dimension to the suffering of Latter-day Saint children of divorce. One child of divorce poignantly recollected her father's promise, "We'll always be a family because we're sealed in the temple."[3] The earthly dissolution of the family, coupled with the priority

Young adults who have dealt with the challenges of their parents' divorce have often learned of their own great need for spiritual guidance.

placed by the Church on families, makes the breakup more devastating for most Church members.

In addition to damaged feelings of self-worth, difficulties with trust and intimacy, and fear of marriage, Latter-day Saint children of divorced parents may sometimes struggle with questions that threaten the core of their testimonies. In a heartbreaking talk, a 10-year-old girl said it was difficult for her to believe in God because what she prayed for most was that her mommy and daddy would get back together again, and God hadn't answered her prayers. Of course, Heavenly Father would not take away the agency of the divorced parents. In situations such as this, sensitive family members, friends, teachers, and leaders can help by making special efforts to share their faith and knowledge that Heavenly Father loves us, and that the power of the gospel for our own lives is still available.

Happily, not all children of divorce are represented by this example.

Jamie also suffered a variety of losses because of the divorce of her parents. As a young teenager she worried about her future and wasn't sure about the present either—how to fit in socially, or whether she even wanted to fit in. But she worked hard to find answers to her questions. She sought out teachers, friends, and a bishop to confide in. She also received help from trained counselors from time to time. She was able to identify which concerns were rational and which were not, as well as practical ways for ensuring the success of her own marriage, and she has now been happily married for several years.

The Opportunity for Strengths

Life for children of divorce may sometimes seem depressing. But without question, divorce is like other crises of life in that danger almost always comes with a companion—opportunity.[4] So, what are the opportunities—the factors that may become strengths—for children of divorced parents?

Enhanced appreciation for enduring love. Losses associated with their parents' divorce frequently result in children placing an even higher value on sustaining relationships and on love, fidelity, and compassion. Although they may experience heightened anxiety in forming enduring attachments, most are strongly committed to the ideals of a lasting marriage and to morality.[5]

Maturity, independence, and realism. Because they tend to mature more quickly and are more independent and because of their less idealized view of marriage, children of divorce tend to be more realistic, researchers have found.[6] They are familiar with possible difficulties and may be more likely to enter a marriage relationship with their eyes open. This need not mean they are cynical or doubting, only that they are aware of the need for charity and cooperation in a marriage.

Wisdom and determination. In my conversations with Latter-day Saint young adults whose parents were divorced, I have found in some a maturity and common-sense wisdom that we might hope would be evident in all of our children, though none of us would want them to gain it through watching their parents' marriage fail. One young woman said, "My parents' divorce gave me the determination to do whatever it takes to make my marriage succeed." Another noted that she finally realized she could find happiness in marriage when she envisioned eternal marriage with a young man who had been her friend for a long time.

Young adults whose parents have been divorced frequently see a long-term friendship as a way to develop trust and to make wise decisions regarding marriage. One young woman mentioned that because of the divorce of her parents she was more keenly aware of the importance of communication in marriage. She made extra efforts to strengthen her own commitment to eternal gospel principles and sought opportunities to develop communication skills.

Growth through struggle. Lehi taught that without "opposition in all things," righteousness and good cannot be brought to pass (2 Ne. 2:11). Young adults who have successfully dealt with the challenges of their parents' divorce frequently show great spiritual growth. The difficulties they have faced often have taught them of their dependence on the Lord and their need for spiritual guidance. Through the prophet Moroni, the Lord said: "And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).

For example, after struggling with a childhood and adolescence spoiled by the trauma of divorce, one woman reported that her own marriage was surprisingly comfortable and satisfying. To make it work well,

HOPE FOR SINGLE PARENTS

"One spiritually motivated parent can successfully raise up a family to the Lord. Some of the best men and women I have known have come from such families."

Elder Gene R. Cook of the Seventy, *Raising Up a Family to the Lord* (1993), xv.

she identified principles that would be basic to any successful marriage but had personal meaning for her. She emphasized: "The key to making marriage work is having Heavenly Father with us in our home. That includes consistent prayer, studying and pondering the scriptures together, and effective communication." A young woman looking forward to marriage noted that because of parental divorce, she focused on her own individual choices and responsibilities. She shared a determination to "stay in tune and rely on the Spirit."

If This Applies, What Can You Do?

The effects of divorce unquestionably can be damaging, but they do not need to be crippling. You can overcome the pain and suffering, though you may feel the situation has been devastating. You can regroup, learn, and grow.

Trust in the Lord. Heavenly Father is mindful of each of us in a very personal way, and His divine plan includes a way for us to overcome the effects of opposition and enjoy eternal blessings. There is great wisdom in the Lord's counsel to the Prophet Joseph Smith during a time of severe persecution: "Be still and know that I am God" (D&C 101:16; see vv. 12–18). Talk to your Church leaders and close friends about their relationship to God. Read the scriptures and words of the Brethren, pondering and praying sincerely. Reread your patriarchal blessing, remembering that the Lord has great blessings in store for you. Exercise and increase your faith in God and in the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Develop trust in friends and family. Your trust in a divine plan can generate trust in those around you who may be less than perfect yet are children of God. Through Christlike charity, we can learn to love people despite some imperfections. There is no comfort in freedom from heartache gained at the cost of freedom from loving others. Trust and disappointment are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Forgive your parents. Don't let your parents' mistakes be your excuses for error. Don't be misled by barren statistics; for every child who followed the path of a misguided parent, you can find one who didn't, going all the way back to Abraham, whose father was willing to see him sacrificed to an idol (see Abr. 1:5–7).

Repent of your own wrongdoings and forgive yourself. If you grew up in a home where people were hurt, you may have picked up some harmful behaviors and caused pain to others. You can repent of this once you come to understand your mistakes. The needed repentance for such mistakes is not so much about assignment of blame or self-flagellation as it is about making amends for the hurt, where possible.

Learn to choose. Your individual accountability and agency empower you to choose, and you need not be imprisoned by damaging family patterns or relationships. You have the right to say no to manipulation or degradation, and it is not your responsibility to keep everyone happy, particularly if they are determined to persist in unproductive or morally unacceptable behavior. When divorce has occurred, find in the new family structure a way of developing healthier and more enjoyable traditions and patterns for your own life and the family you will create by marriage.

We can strengthen our own marriages by humbly relying on the atoning sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ and on the principles He taught.

Acquire new interpersonal skills. Taking charge of your life is one of many skills such as communication, joint problem solving, and conflict resolution that are learned, not inherited. Don't be afraid to take a class, attend a seminar, or seek counseling to develop more effective and rewarding interpersonal relationships. But be careful; the training process in acquiring new skills should fit comfortably within the guidelines of the Church. Be in tune with the promptings of the Holy Ghost to know if the schooling and counseling you are receiving are appropriate. In fact, there is no better schooling than the guidance of that still, small voice as you try prayerfully and lovingly to apply the teachings of the Master in your interactions with others.

Identify compensating factors in your life. Every family has strengths. Every environment has supportive resources. Instead of focusing only on losses or problems, find out what is good about your family and what resources are available to you. For example, let yourself be open to receiving help and comfort from extended family members or friends who may be uniquely qualified as mentors. After spending time with an aunt and uncle who were obviously happy, one young woman realized for the first time that a happy marriage is possible. She said, "Somebody in my family actually pulled it off!"

The Promised Hope

Faithful Latter-day Saints are not disadvantaged eternally because of their parents' missteps. President Ezra Taft Benson's promise to a family of divorce makes that abundantly clear: "Please note that a cancellation of sealing of a wife to her husband does not affect children born in the covenant or previously sealed. Such children are entitled to birthright blessings, and if they remain worthy, are assured

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY DEL PARSON

the right and privilege of eternal parentage regardless of what happens to their natural parents or the parents to whom they were sealed."[7]

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles underscores that promise: "I testify that with unimaginable suffering and agony at an incalculable price, the Savior earned His right to be our Intermediary, our Redeemer, our Final Judge. Through faith in Him and receipt of the requisite ordinances and covenants, you will earn your right to the blessings of eternal marriage made possible through His infinite Atonement."[8]

My first marriage ended 19 years ago, but I continue to learn of ways in which my children and I were affected by that divorce. Nevertheless, there have been growth opportunities for me and for them because of it. I am a different person because of my struggle. I have been humbled; I understand what it means to have a broken heart and a contrite spirit (see D&C 97:8), and I have learned something about patience in suffering. I have learned that a broken heart is not a crushed or destroyed heart; it is a heart broken open to receive inspiration, love, and service. I have learned that there is no easy road to the celestial kingdom and that there is no way to get through life untested.

Divorce—even when it is our parents'—can be one of many stumbling blocks in life. Yet regardless of the struggle we face, we can strengthen our own marriages by humbly relying on the atoning sacrifice of our Savior Jesus Christ and on the principles of love and truth that He taught. □

NOTES

1. In most cases, names of people used as examples in this article have been changed.
2. Deborah Milne, *Reflections from a Broken Mirror: Spiritual Values I Learned as an LDS Child of Divorce* (1998), 139.
3. Milne, *Reflections from a Broken Mirror,* 61.
4. Two characters—one meaning *danger* and the other *opportunity*—have been used to represent *crisis* in the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages.
5. Judith S. Wallerstein, "Children of Divorce: Recent Findings Regarding Long-term Effects and Recent Studies of Joint and Sole Custody," *Pediatrics in Review*, Jan. 1990, 197–204; "The Long-term Effects of Divorce on Children: A Review," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, May 1991, 349–60.
6. See Wallerstein, "Children of Divorce"; Paul R. Amato, "Parental Divorce and Attitudes toward Marriage and Family Life," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, May 1988, 453–61.
7. Letter to Deborah Milne's family, as quoted in *Reflections from a Broken Mirror*, 146–47.
8. "Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign,* May 1999, 27.

Faithful members are not disadvantaged eternally by parents' mistakes.

Elaine Walton is a member of the Edgemont Ninth Ward, Provo Utah Edgemont North Stake.

More on this topic: See "Building a Successful Marriage," Ensign, *Mar. 1998, 27; "Mending Our Marriage,"* Ensign, *Oct. 1996, 44; Theodore M. Burton, "A Marriage to Last through Eternity,"* Ensign, *June 1987, 12.*

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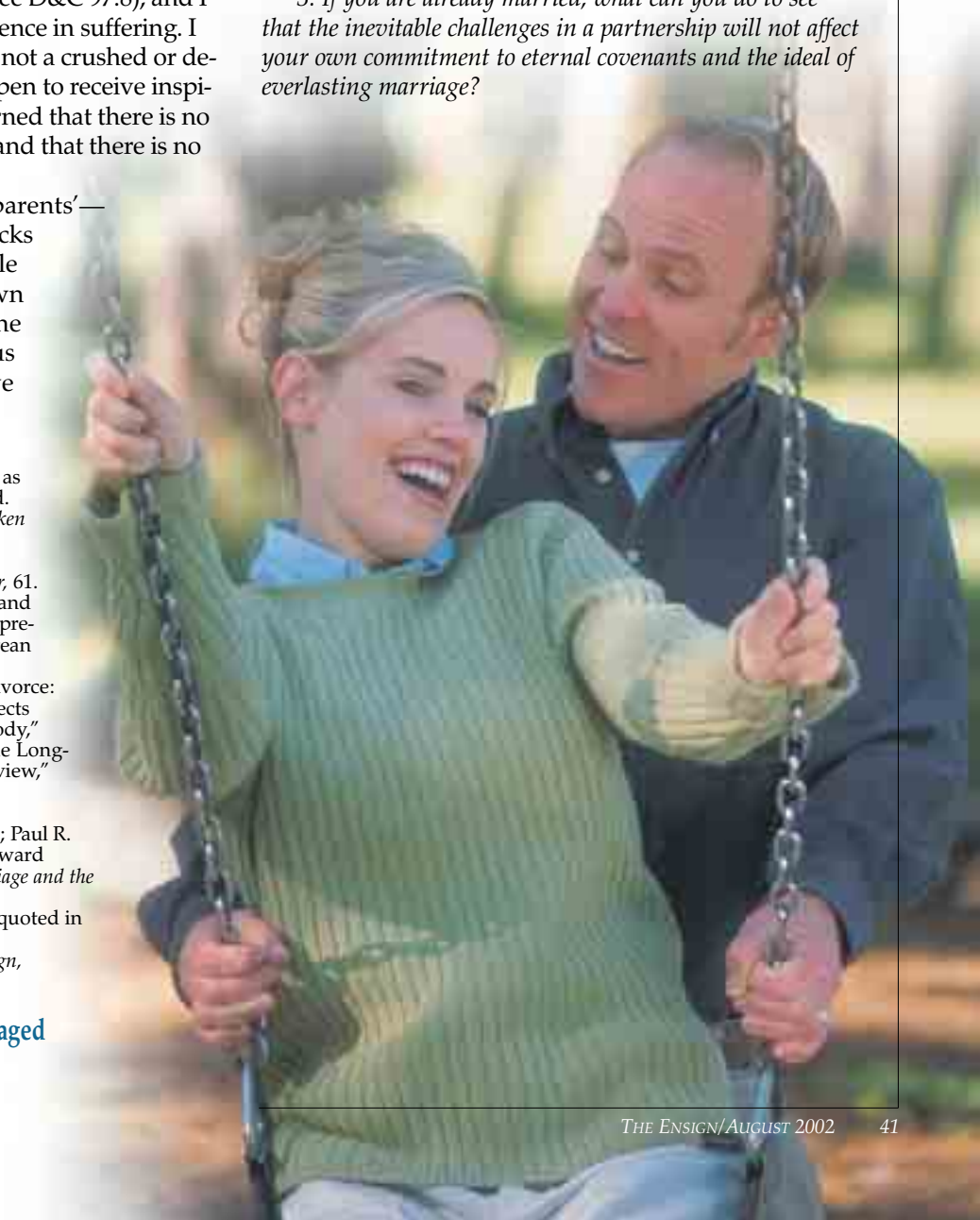
Let's Talk about It

Most Ensign *articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or personal reflection.*

1. As you prepare for temple marriage, what can you do to assure that you understand the eternal covenants and blessings promised?

2. What qualities can you seek in a marriage partner to help assure that he or she is committed to making and keeping eternal covenants of love and fidelity?

3. If you are already married, what can you do to see that the inevitable challenges in a partnership will not affect your own commitment to eternal covenants and the ideal of everlasting marriage?



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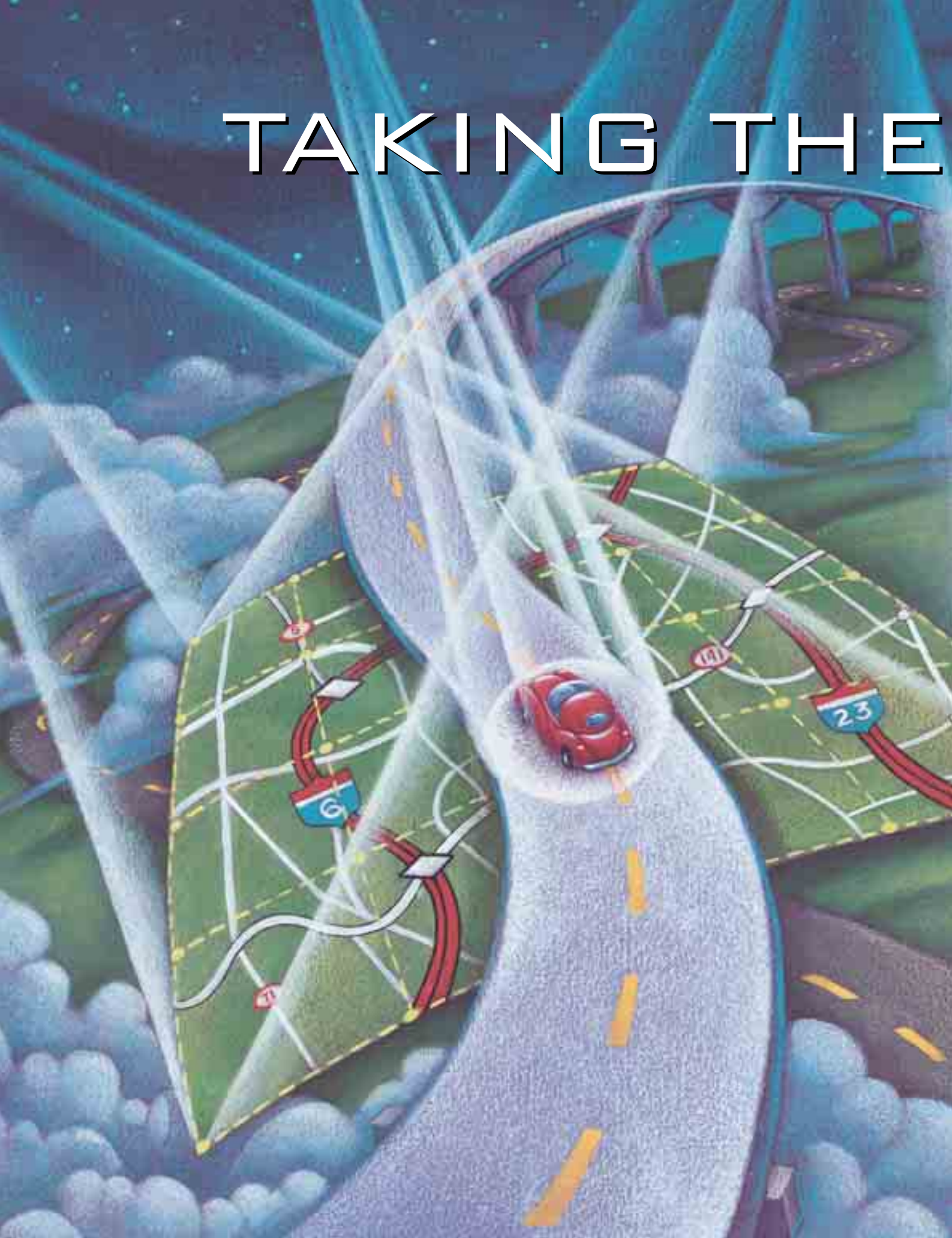


HIGHER ROAD

It is an eternal truth that through the choices we make we shape our own destiny.

By Elder W. Craig Zwick
Of the Seventy

Recently my wife and I rented a car and drove from Boston, Massachusetts, to New Hampshire. We were to meet President and Sister Hunter of the New Hampshire Manchester Mission. The president had given us instructions on how to get to the mission home. We also had a map of the area. Our rental car was equipped with a sophisticated instrument called the Magellan vehicle navigation system. It is the most advanced onboard system ever engineered by experts in satellite navigation technology. It gives clear turn-by-turn voice prompts as well as visual directions.

We entered the city and street address of the mission home into the Magellan system and started our journey. The instructions were precise and accurate: "In one mile you will make a right hand turn"; then, after a moment, "Get into the right lane and exit in two-tenths of a mile." We were instructed to exit the turnpike at the first tollbooth. We became confused because there were different tollbooths for different destinations, and we weren't sure which was the correct one. We chose the one that we thought was the correct exit, but we made a mistake. We actually got off the turnpike one exit too soon. It required us to stop the vehicle and then to reprogram the system based upon our new location. With the help of our navigation system, we knew precisely where we were. We then got back onto the Everett Turnpike so we could take the correct exit.

We learned to depend upon our onboard navigational instrument. Without it, we would have been lost and confused. We also would not have made a timely connection with the mission president and his wife. As it turned out, we arrived on time and were grateful for the help we received.

We each have our own onboard navigation system to give us turn-by-turn instructions. However, it has nothing to do with finding a certain street or a specific location. It has everything to do with our eternal destination. Our destination is clearly defined, and a good navigation system will help us achieve exaltation and eternal life.

> We must choose one of two highways: the lower road leading to spiritual delays and sorrow, or the higher road leading to spiritual progress and happiness.

We all want to be on the right road. We all desire to move effectively down that highway of life with the least amount of detours and delays. We all have moments when we get slightly confused and need additional help in making correct choices. We are frequently at a crossroads where we must choose one of two highways: the lower road leading to spiritual delays and sorrow, or the higher road leading to spiritual progress and happiness. It is very important for us to always choose the higher road.

It is an eternal truth that through the choices we make, we shape our own destiny. Our success or failure, peace or discontent, happiness or misery depends upon the choices we make each day. As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a built-in navigation system. We have been given the gift of the Holy Ghost to direct us in all things. "Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you

ILLUSTRATED BY GREG NEWBOLD

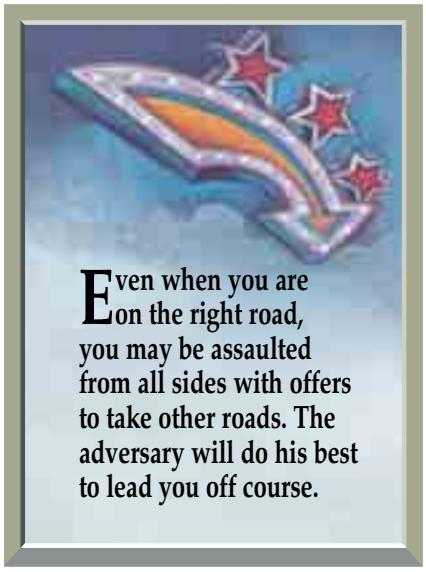
and which shall dwell in your heart" (D&C 8:2).

For our navigation system to work effectively, we must have an understanding of where we are and where we are going. This gives us the point of reference and the tracking system to move us along identified routes to our destination. For example, it would be difficult for the navigation system to work if we were in the Brazilian rain forest and there were no identifiable points of reference. This would present a challenge for even the most sophisticated global positioning system.

In order for an onboard navigation system to work, you must stop, allowing the system to identify exactly where you are by its global positioning system. Then you can program in your desired destination. It will then suggest the best route for you.

That is exactly what you must do in your own lives. You must stop and take time to evaluate precisely where you are. It is not an imaginary place. Look around at your true point of beginning, your precise location. The part that is slightly more complicated goes beyond your physical location. It has to do with where you are on your spiritual highway. That is the part which requires some honest introspection and personal prayer to determine your exact position. The Lord knows your precise spiritual location. He has said, "I know thy heart, and have heard thy prayers" (D&C 112:11).

I assure you that He knows you and loves you. He is aware of your precise physical and spiritual location. He knows if you are well positioned and if you are in need of some course correction. He knows your heart, and He knows your desires to seek and remain on the higher road.



Satan's Tactics

Often you can be on the right road but will be assaulted from all sides with offers to take other roads or more attractive travel itineraries. The adversary will be doing his best to lead you off your desired course. He is relentless in trying to catch your attention, and then, ever so craftily, he will lead you into dangerous blind canyons and dead ends.

The other day my wife and I were in the grocery store. While we were waiting in line at the check-out counter, I glanced at the magazines. I saw portrayed on the covers of many magazines the idols of the movie screen, the heroes of the athletic field, those faces and bodies that many young people try to emulate even as these heroes defy the laws of God and rationalize away sinful practices, seemingly with no ill effect. Don't you believe it for a minute. They are destroying their futures.

Satan doesn't want you to reach your ultimate destination, and he doesn't want you to fulfill your divine roles, so he tries to lead you astray. He makes things that are wrong appear right and even exciting. He wants you to destroy your bodies, and he encourages you to break the commandments. He makes the wrong road look smooth and enticing.

With permission, I share with you an excerpt from a letter I received from a father who is concerned with the welfare of his daughter:

"I have four beautiful daughters aged from 19 to 26. All of them have suffered to some extent from eating disorders. They all relate this destructive tendency to pressures from the outside world to conform to its image of women. This has been reinforced with unfortunate comments by young men. Three of my daughters seem to have controlled the problem, but my youngest daughter is in trouble. She is now consuming 300–500 calories per day and shows no sign of overcoming her self-destructive habits. We are at the threshold of placing her in an institution for help. We have nowhere else to turn.

"I am currently grasping for understanding of this disorder, which I think is one manifestation of women's low self-esteem imposed by our society. It is Satan at work. At the moment, her body image, imposed by the world, has control. Does she understand that the most important image she should have of herself is that of a holy temple endowed with the power and love of God? Does she understand that she should do nothing to desecrate her temple? I have not taught her this truth with enough consistency and clarity. Would it make a difference if I had?"

I pondered the anguish and heartbreak of this father. He loves his precious daughter. This is happening to many of our young women. You must not let Satan reduce your feelings of self-worth. Don't let the world pull you off course. Our Heavenly Father loves each of you and wants you to return home, but He will not remove your agency. You must do your part and be steady in making correct choices.

Satan's desire is for you to not know where you are and to not check in to confirm your location. He is the father of lies and will do all possible to lure you into his cunning snare. His desire is to throw enough

immediate pleasure your way that you never even worry about where you are. He even causes you to have moments of discouragement or lack of faith.

Overcoming Discouragement

There may be moments when you are driven off-course or have unexpected detours. Don't allow yourselves to be discouraged by events you cannot control. Overcome discouragement by trusting in the Lord and losing yourself in serving others. When your service is pure, you will be able to make adjustments in your own behavior that will result in happiness and in a knowledge of your own self-worth. This will also qualify you to receive more responsibility and to have added light and understanding.

There are times when it is hard, very hard. You may be worrying about finances, health, work, or school. Relationships are sometimes difficult and family problems are real, and sometimes it seems that no one understands. Immorality, dishonesty, immodesty, pornography, discouragement, and all kinds of evil influences are flaunted on every side. Self-discipline is a lifetime process, one that requires you to trust and act upon the promptings of the Spirit. If you will pray and study the scriptures, you will know what direction to take, and you will be blessed in making correct choices.

Just because we have challenges or difficult decisions to make, just because sometimes it seems we take two steps forward and one step back, we must never allow Satan to pull us off course. When we begin to make incorrect choices, we move further and further away from our true source of happiness. The Lord has made it clear to us that "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). Too many try to serve two masters—the Lord and their own selfish interests (see Matt. 6:24).

I have thought recently of one of my finest missionary companions. He was an inspirational leader in our mission. He had such unusual skills that everyone wanted to learn from him.

He returned from his mission and made some excellent choices that resulted in his marrying a wonderful young woman for time and all eternity in the Los Angeles Temple. They were blessed with four outstanding children.

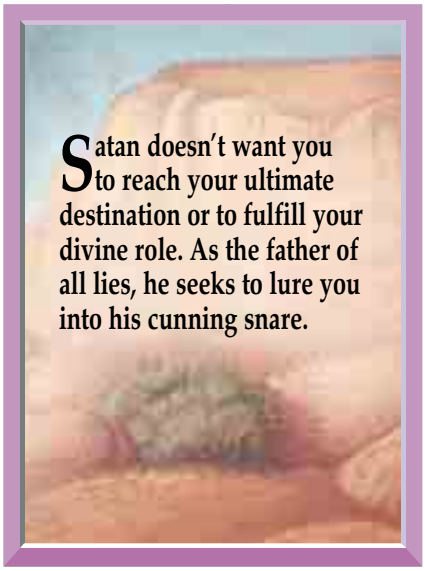
Part of his law enforcement and legal work required close contact with individuals involved with drugs and other sinful behaviors. He was caught in Satan's subtle snare. One bad decision led to another and then another. Within a short period of time he was caught in a spiritual

free fall. He lost his fine wife and children in the process. Today he lives without the benefit of the priesthood or his temple blessings. His life has been one of sadness, anger, and frustration. Seemingly small decisions resulting in the loss of the Spirit of the Lord have now caused him to be bitter toward the very things which were at one time his meaningful treasures.

My heart is troubled because of his present condition in which he is without the blessings of the gospel in his life.

I believe that my friend is saddened with all he has lost by taking this unmarked trail of destruction. I marvel that one of the very elect of God, with a spiritual destiny of excellence, has now fallen prey to the wicked influence of the adversary. It makes me sad to think that his wife, to whom he was once sealed, and those beautiful children born under sacred covenant will not be his eternally. Oh, how I mourn his loss!

My friends, be very cautious not to allow even a slight deviation from your course of happiness. If you think you can procrastinate repentance, or if you are of the opinion that personal prayer and daily scripture study are not important, just remember what happened to my fine missionary companion. I assure you there is no happiness in what he is now going through.



Seek the Spirit of the Lord

Our personal navigation system has a detailed set of instructions with specific directions that must be followed in order for it to function properly. These instructions in our personal lives are the holy scriptures. They are "the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation" (D&C 68:4). There are so many blessings promised to those who know the scriptures. One of these blessings is that the scriptures, like the iron rod, can help us pass safely through the mist of darkness that surrounds us in this world.

If we catch hold of the scriptures and cling to them, if we increase our study and application, and if we pray for understanding and live so the Spirit can teach us, the scriptures will save us from temptations. The scriptures can help us make good decisions. The scriptures can keep us safe and lead us to salvation. When we read the scriptures, we invite and make ourselves accessible to the communications of the Holy Ghost.

Learn to ponder the things of the Spirit and to respond to its promptings; filter out the static generated by Satan. As you become attuned to the Spirit, "thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21).

We must each decide which of all the outside voices we will listen to and believe. Throughout our lives we must be steady in choosing that which comes from the Lord and avoiding that which comes from Satan. Our daily choices shape our character.

The Spirit's voice is calm and peaceful. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17). To have joy in this life, we are told to "give ear to the voice of the living God; and attend to the words of wisdom which shall be given unto you" (D&C 50:1).

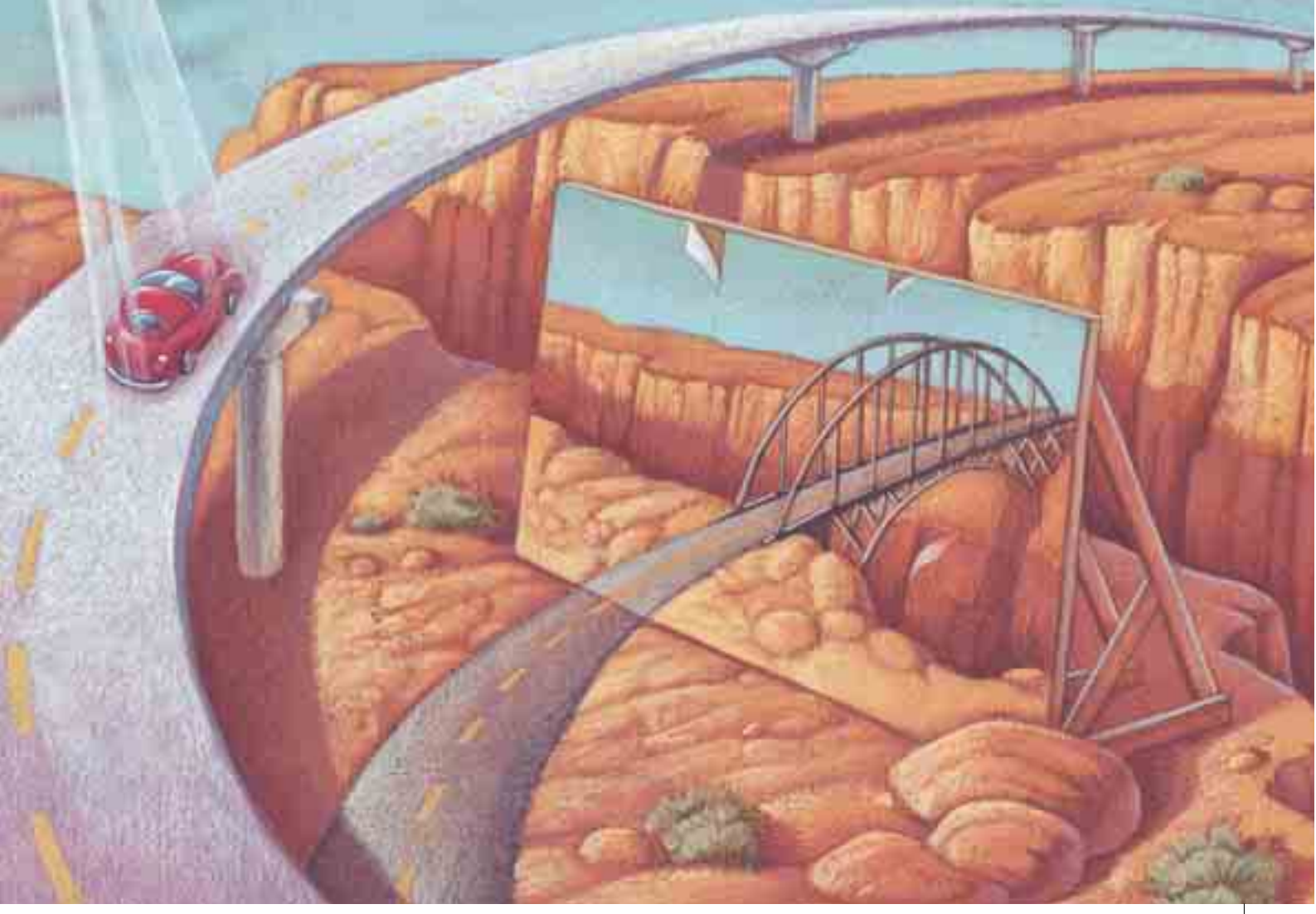
As we earnestly seek the Spirit in our lives by daily scripture study and by quiet moments in which we connect with our divine source, we position ourselves to receive clear spiritual direction in our lives.

I remember clearly the very place I was at the University of Utah when I made a decision not to pursue architecture as a professional career and to focus my attention on a different course of study. It came in subtle suggestions at first, which motivated me to pray with the intent to know. After prayerful consideration, it was perfectly clear to me that I was not to be an architect.

Since that time more than 30 years ago, I have worked with many architects, and although I have great respect and admiration for their noble profession, it became clear to me that the satisfaction I received from actually building a structure was more satisfying for me than designing it. My own career as a builder was a direct result of listening to the Spirit and following its whisperings.

Hearkening to the voice of living prophets is another navigational tool that gives us "peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) reminded us: "The most important thing you can do is to learn to talk to God. Talk to Him as you would talk to your father, for He is your Father, and He wants you to talk to Him. He wants you to cultivate ears to listen, when He gives you the impressions of the Spirit to tell you what to do. If you learn to give heed to the sudden ideas which come to your minds, you will find those things coming through in the very hour of your need. If you will cultivate an ear to hear these promptings, you will have learned to walk by the spirit of revelation" (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee,* ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 130).



President Gordon B. Hinckley has warned us: "You must find a place to commune with the Lord and feel of His Spirit. This must happen in our lives not occasionally but constantly. The need is so great. We can be so much more effective. In the rush of our lives, we do not take enough time to ponder and meditate and go to the Lord. We need the Lord's help if we are to do His work."

Our lives are extremely busy. We can all relate to this. We run from one activity to another. We may wear ourselves out in thoughtless pursuit of goals that are highly ephemeral. We are entitled to spend some quiet time alone, in introspection, in spiritual development. Blessings from priesthood leaders, fathers, and husbands are additional tools that allow us to stay on the higher road. Frequently review your patriarchal blessing for guidance. It will give you additional light and understanding. Be honest with your priesthood leaders when you meet with them. It is your opportunity for introspection and a progress review. It is a safety precaution that will prevent a costly detour along the critical path of reaching exaltation and eternal life.

The Lord Himself has said, "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

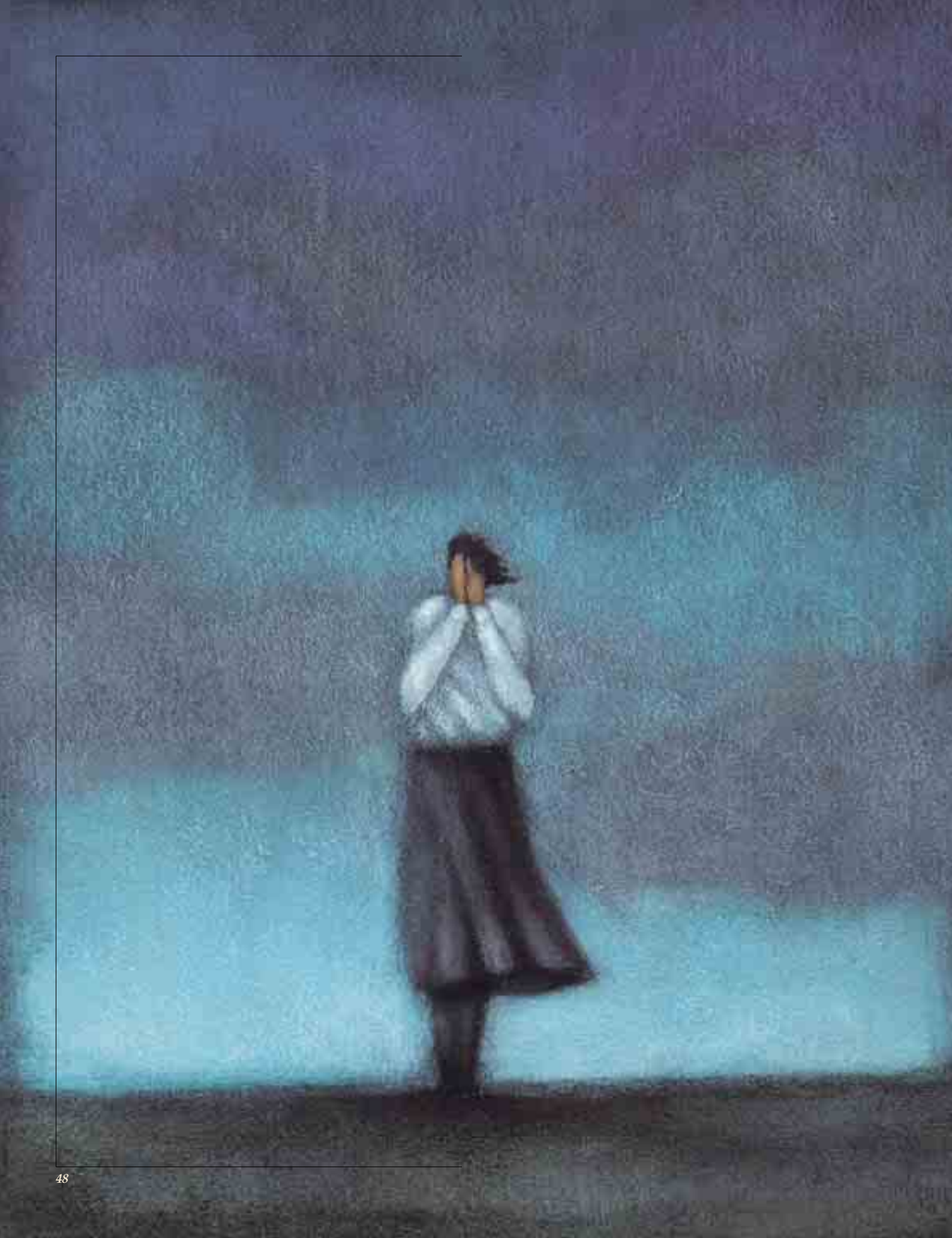
It is not possible for me to describe to you what a powerful force for good you are in the world. You are powerful and can make a positive difference in the lives of many. You must always know precisely where you are, even when all that surrounds you is a background of darkness and confusion. Your responsibility is to continue to generate a bright light and to even co-generate light and knowledge as you link up with the Holy Ghost as your source of inspiration. We are on a well-marked path that leads to our eternal home. □

From a devotional address given at Ricks College (now BYU—Idaho) on 13 February 2001.

Let's Talk about It

Most Ensign *articles can be used for family home evening discussions. The following questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:*

1. *Why is discouragement one of the adversary's most effective tools?*
2. *How can we overcome it?*
3. *How can we become more receptive to the promptings of the Spirit of the Lord?*



MY BATTLE WITH SAME-SEX ATTRACTION

NAME WITHHELD

I WAS CERTAIN HEAVENLY FATHER HAD GIVEN UP ON ME. HOW WRONG I WAS!

There was a time in my life when I believed there was no hope for me—no future—and that I would never come close to being a righteous daughter of God. This resulted from the fact that I felt same-sex attraction and acted on it. I wondered if I could ever be free of the bondage I was in.

I joined the Church at age 21 and was an active member until I started acting on the confused feelings I had experienced for many years. I knew the Lord did not approve of my actions, but I was not willing to give them up, so I stayed away from the Church altogether.

The turning point came when a friend visited me shortly after returning home from her mission. She noticed that there seemed to be a coldness in my home and that I seemed different somehow. When she questioned me about this, I admitted my problem to her. She urged me to see my bishop.

I resisted at first, but inside I knew I would never be happy as long as I continued my behavior. I decided I wanted to be close to the Lord more than I wanted the lifestyle I was living, so I made an appointment with my bishop. When the time for our interview arrived, I tried to act cool and nonchalant, but my heart was pounding. I felt humiliated, ashamed, and frightened. I was sure the bishop would be uncomfortable with my disclosure and would ask a few cursory questions before ushering me out the door.

Instead, he listened to my story with compassion and concern. After we discussed my situation at length, he urged me to attend all my Church meetings and to meet with him regularly. He encouraged me to spend time in fasting and prayer, and he said he would do the same so that he would be prepared to offer me the counsel the Lord wanted me to receive. What affected me most of all was when he told me, "Sandra, Heavenly Father loves you. You are His child, and He wants to help you."

The Spirit of the Lord confirmed the truth of those words, and I was overcome. My understanding of the gospel was relatively new at that time, and I had been sure Heavenly Father wanted nothing to do with me. But that wasn't true—He loved me! He understood my challenges far better than I did, and He would help me repent and return to Him! I left the bishop's office with a lighter heart.

I started coming back to church and taking the first steps of repentance. It wasn't easy to break away from the lifestyle I had been living for so long, and there were times I felt discouraged and overwhelmed, wondering if I could continue along this new path.

But I soon realized what had been missing from my life for quite some time—the influence of the Holy Ghost. Church became an anchor for me, a safe shelter. I followed the counsel my bishop gave during my meetings with him, and eventually the Spirit was able to operate more fully in my life.

Many years have passed since that first meeting with my bishop. I wish I could say that I never again struggled or felt same-sex attraction, but that would not be true. What I have gained, however, is the strength not to act on those feelings, as well as the sense of peace I craved for so many years. Any desire I have had to act on this temptation has been overshadowed by a stronger desire to serve the Lord. I have come so far, and while I do not know if my healing will be complete in this life or in the next, I do know that God is aware of my efforts, that He is actively involved in my life, and that He will bless me with a complete and total healing when the time is right.

Through my experience, I have learned key principles that have helped me in my struggle. These principles can be applied by anyone seeking to overcome a moral weakness:

Trust in the Lord. In the world there is a debate over the origins of same-sex attraction. Yet Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches that regardless of our personal susceptibilities, we are responsible for our thoughts and behavior: "Some kinds of feelings seem to be inborn. Others are traceable to mortal experiences. Still other feelings seem to be acquired from a complex interaction of 'nature and nurture.' All of us have some feelings we did not choose, but the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us that we still have the power to resist and reform our feelings (as needed) and to assure that they do not

ILLUSTRATED BY GREG HALLY

lead us to entertain inappropriate thoughts or to engage in sinful behavior" ("Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign,* Oct. 1995, 9).

To overcome this challenge, trust the Lord and obey Him. He knows how to succor you and will give you the strength not to act upon your temptations, whatever they may be (see Alma 7:12; 13:28; 34:39; 1 Cor. 10:13). Isaiah 29:16 asks, "Shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?" Know that your Creator understands you perfectly, and He knows how to help you. As you turn your heart over to Him and submit fully to His will, He will heal you in His own due time (see 3 Ne. 18:32).

Fast and pray. Pray unceasingly and "with all the energy of heart" (Moro. 7:48). Fast and pray for protection against the adversary and for deliverance from unholy thoughts. Do not assume that the way will be easy, for no matter what you do, Satan will desire to ensnare you. Be on the alert always (see Mosiah 4:30). Invite the Spirit of the Lord to be with you constantly, and strive to be worthy of it. The companionship of the Holy Ghost will speak to you in a still, small voice; listen to the promptings and obey them.

Remember who you are. Remember that you kept your first estate; otherwise you would not be on earth today. Remember that Heavenly Father loves you and wants you to come home to Him and receive all the blessings He has in store for you. He will be your great encourager if you will only give place in your heart for Him.

Do not attach labels to yourself or others who struggle with this problem. We all have temptations, but they do not define who we are. Know that having this particular challenge does not make you an "evil" person. As you commit not to act on these attractions, and as you immerse yourself in righteous thoughts and activities, you can be worthy of all the Lord has to offer. The freedom you find will be sweet to you.

Read and ponder the scriptures daily. Make this a priority. Through the words of the prophets, the Lord will bear you up. Sincerely liken the scriptures to yourself (see 1 Ne. 19:23). As you do so, you will make yourself more receptive to the promptings of the

Spirit of the Lord, which will guide you in the paths of righteousness.

Change your environment. Gain the strength to resist temptation by leaning heavily on Heavenly Father and listening to the voice of the prophets. I made myself more receptive to their counsel by cleansing my home of harmful influences. I stopped watching immoral television programs and gave up inappropriate movies. I threw out tapes and CDs with suggestive lyrics and books with immoral plots or profanity. I removed anything and everything that was not wholesome and clean. I displayed pictures that reminded me of who I really am, and I immersed myself in the scriptures and other edifying books. These things have enriched my life in ways I could not have imagined, and now I never miss what I have forsaken.

Choose righteous associations. Most people tend to become like the individuals they spend the most time with. I urge you to distance yourself from those who see nothing wrong with same-sex attraction. Avoid places frequented by those who are involved in this lifestyle. Quit your job if need be. This is a battle for your eternal exaltation—and *battle* is a fitting word.

Lean on family and friends who see what is best in you. The members of my ward have been wonderful friends to me. As I have reached out to them, they have responded in kind, and I have learned much from their caring examples.

Seek counseling from your bishop and, if necessary, a professional therapist who shares your values. They can offer support and help you through your challenges. If needed, your bishop can refer you to LDS Family Services for counseling or for information about local resources.

Heavenly Father loves each one of us and wants to rescue us. His arms are outstretched toward us "all the day long" (2 Ne. 28:32). He provided the Atonement of His Son so that we might be released from our respective prisons.

I cherish the peace I have found in my own life as I have emerged from the bondage that held me captive for so long. I have learned that Heavenly Father loves us more than we can imagine and that if we allow Him, He will help us in our struggles. How grateful I am for that knowledge and for the freedom I have found as I have followed His counsel. □

LDS Family Services provides professional counseling to members as well as consultation to Church leaders assisting members. Contact your bishop or branch president for more information, or visit ***www.ldsfamilyservices.org****.*

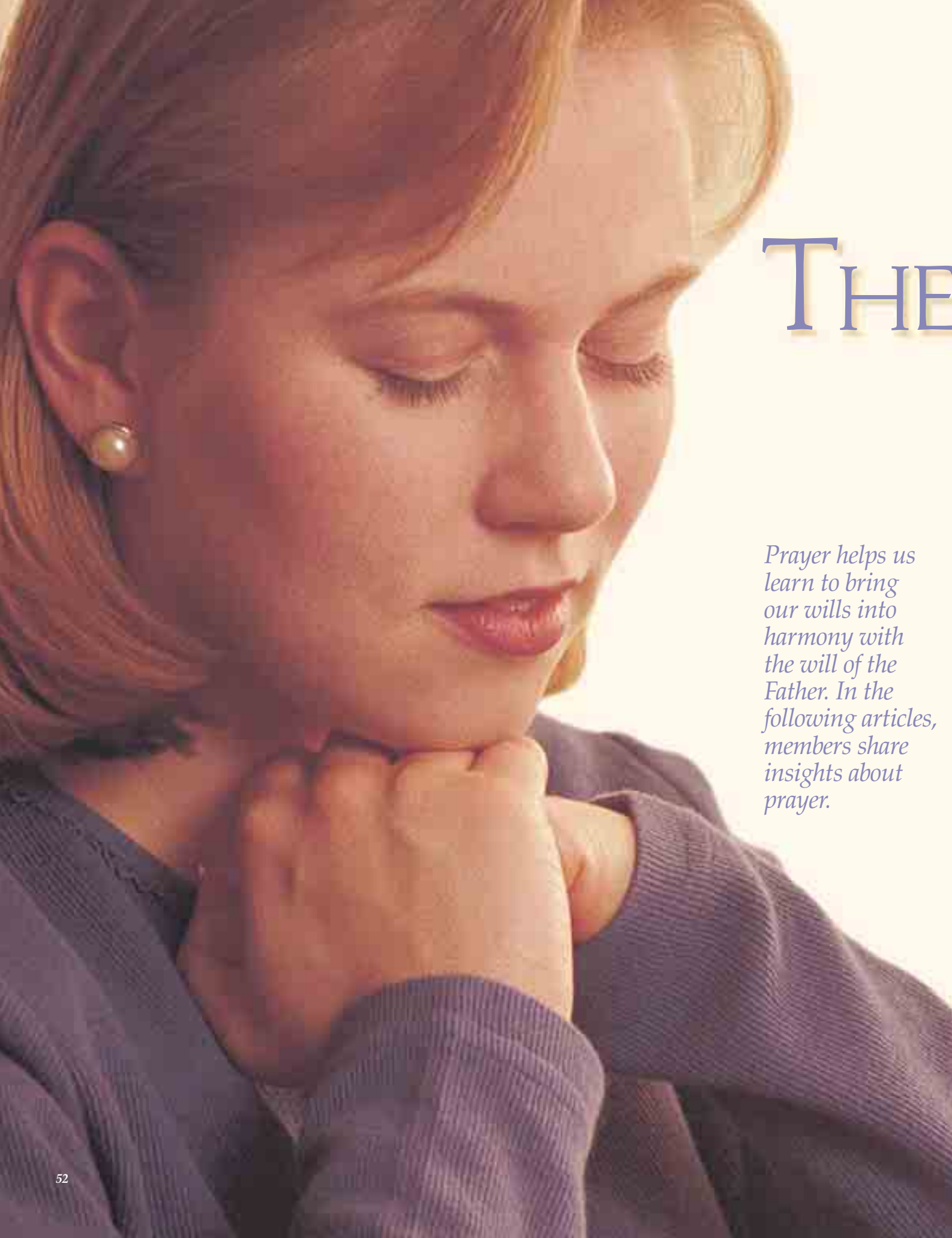
More on this topic: See A. Dean Byrd, "When a Loved One Struggles with Same-Sex Attraction," Ensign, *Sept. 1999, 51–55; Name Withheld, "Becoming Whole Again,"* Ensign, *Jan. 1997, 26–29; Dallin H. Oaks, "Same-Gender Attraction,"* Ensign, *Oct. 1995, 6–14.*

Visit ***www.lds.org*** *or see Church magazines on CD.*

HELP IS AVAILABLE

"Through Christ and his church, those who struggle can obtain help. This help comes through fasting and prayer, through the truths of the gospel, through church attendance and service, through the counsel of inspired leaders, and, where necessary, through professional assistance with problems that require such help. Another important source of help is the strengthening influence of loving brothers and sisters. All should understand that persons (and their family members) struggling with the burden of same-sex attraction are in special need of the love and encouragement that is a clear responsibility of Church members, who have signified by covenant their willingness 'to bear one another's burdens' (Mosiah 18:8) 'and so fulfil the law of Christ' (Gal. 6:2)."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Same-Gender Attraction," ***Ensign,*** **Oct. 1995, 13–14.**



THE

Prayer helps us learn to bring our wills into harmony with the will of the Father. In the following articles, members share insights about prayer.

Prayer: Soul's Sincere Desire

Enriching Our Prayers

By Dan B. Skoubye

Perhaps no commandment is repeated in the scriptures more often than to pray. One of mortality's great lessons is to learn for ourselves the will of God, and that knowledge comes largely as a result of righteous, dedicated prayer.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the role of prayer: "Petitioning in prayer has taught me, again and again, that the vault of heaven with all its blessings is to be opened only by a combination lock. One tumbler falls when there is faith; a second when there is personal righteousness; the third and final tumbler falls only when what is sought is, in God's judgment—not ours—right for us. Sometimes we pound on the vault door for something we want very much and wonder why the door does not open. We would be very spoiled children if that vault door opened any more easily than it does. I can tell, looking back, that God truly loves me by inventorying the petitions He has refused to grant me. Our rejected petitions tell us much about ourselves but also much about our flawless Father."[1]

To help us each to improve the intentions, approaches, and results of our prayers, here are some scriptures and thoughts that have helped me.

Preparing to Pray

Anciently, altars were built for the purpose of offering prayer. Building such altars required worshipers to prepare the ground, gather unhewn stones (see Ex. 20:25), and fit the stones carefully into place. The considerable time and effort spent reflected reverence, respect, and preparation.

While we no longer physically build altars for personal prayer, we can build figurative altars through our faith. Some of the stones available to us include scripture study, meditation, temple attendance, family history work, and service. When we kneel to pray, in a sense we offer up all our spiritual efforts and preparations. If we have not made sufficient effort, it can be equivalent to carelessly throwing stones into a pile for an altar.

Praying with Real Intent

Moroni said it is "counted evil unto a man, if he shall pray and not with real intent of heart; yea, and it profiteth him nothing, for God receiveth none such" (Moro. 7:9). The question is, How do we determine if we have real intent? Or perhaps a better way to state the question is, What do we intend to do with the answer God reveals to us? If the honest answer is "nothing" or "as little as possible," we might expect Him to withhold our answer until we *intend* to willingly comply with all our heart. When we do receive answers, we need to be obedient if we expect further answers to come.

PHOTO BY CRAIG DIMOND; ALL PHOTOGRAPHY POSED BY MODELS; BORDER BY DILLEEN MARSH

The Savior has given us the supreme example of being willing to do whatever our Father asks, even when the task seems painful or impossible. When faced with drinking the bitterest of all cups, His humble reply was, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39).

PHOTO BY JED CLARK; *PRAYER AT GETHSEMANE*, BY DEL PARSON

Asking for the Right Things

The Savior said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Ne. 18:20). Other scriptures enlighten us in this area: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3); "Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss" (2 Ne. 4:35); "Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not" (D&C 8:10); "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you; and if ye ask anything that is not expedient for you, it shall turn unto your condemnation" (D&C 88:64–65).

It may be clear that we shouldn't ask for the wrong things, but sometimes it is not as clear how we determine what the right things are to ask for. Asking to pass a test we didn't study for or to win a lottery are clearly on the "amiss" side of the equation. But what about praying for obstacles to be removed in our lives, relief from afflictions, or help in directions we want to go?

The entry under "prayer" in the Bible Dictionary is insightful: "Prayer is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other. The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them."

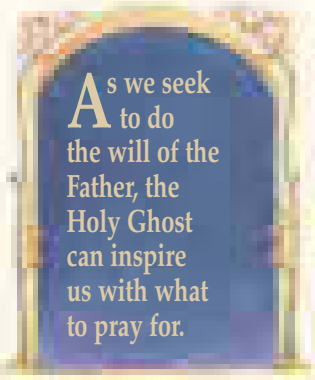
How is our will brought into correspondence with the will of the Father? The scriptures answer: "He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh" (D&C 46:30). As we grow in the principle of prayer, we come to recognize that the Lord will guide our words by His Spirit, that the Holy Ghost will inspire us with what we should pray for. As we pray by the Spirit, we will find our minds lifted up as if on eagles' wings, and our pleadings and praises will resound with the approbation of heaven because our minds will be in harmony with the mind of the Lord. The scriptures say: "And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask" (D&C 50:29–30).

Discussing why it is necessary for the Holy Ghost to prompt us in our prayers, Elder Maxwell said: "God sees things as they really are and as they will become. We don't! In order to tap that precious perspective during our prayers, we must rely upon the promptings of the Holy Ghost. With access to that kind of knowledge, we would then pray for what we and others should have—*really* have. With the Spirit prompting us, we will not ask 'amiss.'"[2]

Finding Answers through Inspired Sources

Sometimes we already have an answer available before we kneel down to pray. The Lord expects us to search the scriptures and the words of living prophets. For example, a healthy Latter-day Saint young man does not need to ask if he should go on a mission. The Lord has already spoken clearly on that matter. It has been said that if we want to talk to the Lord, we pray. If we want the Lord to speak to us, we read the scriptures and the words of the living prophets. The scriptures can literally be a Urim and Thummim by which the Lord can answer our prayers.

Often the Lord requires us to use our own judgment, and therefore He lovingly and tutorially withholds an answer. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "When we explain a problem and a proposed solution, sometimes He answers yes, sometimes no. Often He withholds an answer, not for lack of concern, but because he loves—perfectly. He wants us to apply truths He has given us. For us to grow, we need to trust our ability to make correct decisions. We need to do what we *feel* is right. In time, He will answer. He will not fail us."[3]



President Brigham Young stated, "If I ask him [God] to give me wisdom concerning any requirement in life, or in regard to my own course, or that of my friends, my family, my children, or those that I preside over, and get no answer from him, and then do the very best that my judgment will teach me, he is bound to own and honor that transaction, and he will do so to all intents and purposes."[4]

Expressing Praise and Gratitude

Perhaps one reason we sometimes don't seem to receive answers to our prayers is that we are so concerned about our own needs that we fail to give thanks, praise, and adoration. The scriptures are clear: "Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things. . . . And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments" (D&C 59:7, 21). President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982) of the First Presidency said, "The sin of ingratitude is grievous."[5]

I am grateful that this dispensation was opened because a young man believed in God and asked in prayer for direction (see James 1:5–6). It is today as it has been from the beginning and will be until the end of time: God hears and answers prayers. He is willing to grant us wisdom and help as soon as we are ready to receive.□

NOTES

1. "Insights," *New Era,* Apr. 1978, 6.
2. "What Should We Pray For?" in *Prayer* (1977), 45.
3. "Learning to Recognize Answers to Prayer," *Ensign,* Nov. 1989, 31.
4. *Discourses of Brigham Young,* comp. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 43.
5. Introduction to *Prayer,* 3.

Dan B. Skoubye is a member of the Parkway Fifth Ward, South Jordan Utah Parkway Stake.

Prayer in a Practical Vein

By Kayleen Silver

As a single mother, I have had many opportunities to pray for Heavenly Father's help with all kinds of challenges, from fixing a broken furnace in subfreezing temperatures to seeking a master's degree so I could earn enough to support my family. Heavenly Father has always responded wisely and generously—though not always as I have expected—and I have come to understand some practical things about prayer.

Starting Each Day with Prayer

I begin my day praying for Heavenly Father's help in guiding my activities. I am then able to order my priorities correctly and set attainable goals. Many times I have so much to do that I know I can't get it all done, and I feel overwhelmed. In prayer I choose a few of the most important things to do that day. Often what seemed so important in the daily grind of life takes its proper place during prayer. As I ponder choices and alternatives, the most important tasks seem to become more vivid in my mind, and the less important ones become dimmer (see D&C 9:8–9).

When I have asked for Heavenly Father's help and if I am receptive to promptings from the Holy Ghost, I am often guided in carrying out the day's activities. Many times I have seen what I might once have called coincidences happen to help me meet my goals. I feel that beginning the day with prayerful planning, helps all things work together for our good (see D&C 90:24). Even when things don't go as planned, I am satisfied that I have done my best to seek inspiration and wisdom and that other divinely approved opportunities and lessons are in store for me.

Exercising Spiritual Muscles

Inspiration often comes as we participate in everyday righteous habits. Tasks that can seem mundane are actually the foundation of inspiration, revelation, and miracles. Scripture reading, family prayers, church attendance, and all the things we do hundreds and thousands of times during our lives are stones that build mountains of spirituality. When I am deeply involved in doing a much-needed and worthwhile project, it is easy to bypass often-repeated religious tasks. Yet they are the very tasks that exercise my spiritual muscles and open my understanding to the Lord's communications.

One habit that helps prepare me for receiving answers to prayers is service. Not only is our spirituality increased when we are thinking of others and looking for ways to serve them, but we can receive blessings of our own. For example, one time a family member needed to pick up a friend at the airport. She didn't know the way, so I took time despite my busy schedule to drive her there. At the airport I happened to see a man I knew, and it turned out he was able to give me the name and address of another person I had been praying to find. I counted that episode a blessing of service.

Other good habits that don't necessarily seem spiritual can contribute to receiving Heavenly Father's help

PHOTO BY JED CLARK

and influence. For example, Doctrine and Covenants 88:124 has become my standard for work habits: "Cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated." I have found that by retiring early and arising early, my understanding is enhanced and my energy is increased.

Writing Down Thoughts and Experiences

Writing down thoughts and experiences is an excellent way to recognize and remember inspiration that comes through prayer. I personally find it difficult to take time to write things down, but I am always rewarded when I do. On the other hand, I have lost ideas and insights when I have failed to write them down. One summer morning, for example, I heard beautiful flute music as I awoke. After I got up, I felt I should write down the tune, but it was so vivid in my mind that I thought I would never forget it. I got busy with daily tasks, and when I finally made time to write down the tune it was gone from my memory.

Often inspiration comes as a flood. Many times problems have more than one possible solution, and some challenges have many facets to deal with. When we ask for help in prayer, inspiration may come then or later with many answers for many aspects of our request. In such cases, writing down the flood of ideas becomes the only way to save all the ideas. Often I find myself needing to write in short sentences or sentence fragments, perhaps returning later to organize and complete my notes after the flood is over.

Our minds work on problems while we sleep, and sometimes when we wake up our minds will surge with ideas. It is wise to have paper and pen handy for such moments. In fact, many people who deal in ideas keep paper handy at all times. While we control when we pray, we cannot predict when the Spirit will speak ideas and inspiration to our minds.

Prayer is the most powerful way I know to plan for life, overcome problems, and grow closer to Heavenly Father.

Being Grateful

Gratitude encourages a positive attitude that enables inspiration to flow to us. Gratitude mirrors our priorities: what we are thankful for reminds us of what means the most to us. Gratitude influences our spiritual progress: what we are grateful for tends to be increased, and what we are not grateful for is decreased or eliminated.

An attitude of gratitude helps us prayerfully use opportunities that would otherwise be a burden. For example, driving is a burden for me. During a special project at work, it was necessary for me to drive long distances. By directing my attitude into positive gratitude, I found those drives to be valuable for thinking without everyday interruptions. The long stretches often became a time to communicate my thoughts and feelings to God. We can find many other ways to turn seemingly wasted or irritating facets of life into opportunities that increase our prayerfulness and receptivity to inspiration.

I am grateful that prayer can be a constant part of our lives if we so choose. Some people see the gospel as a religious compartment that is removed from the daily tasks and concerns of life, but in reality the gospel is a necessary component of everyday living. Prayer is the most powerful source I know of to plan and accomplish our goals and dreams, overcome or endure our problems and challenges, and grow closer to Heavenly Father each day. □

Kayleen Silver is a member of the Tabiona Ward, Duchesne Utah Stake.

A Testimony of Prayer

"Believe in prayer," said President Gordon B. Hinckley. "I remind you that the Church came out of an initial prayer offered by the boy Joseph Smith. . . . The Lord will hear the prayers of faithful people as certainly as He heard the prayers of the boy Joseph. I believe that with all my heart" (in *Church News,* 2 Oct. 1999, 2). Following are expressions by members showing the blessings and strength that come through prayer.

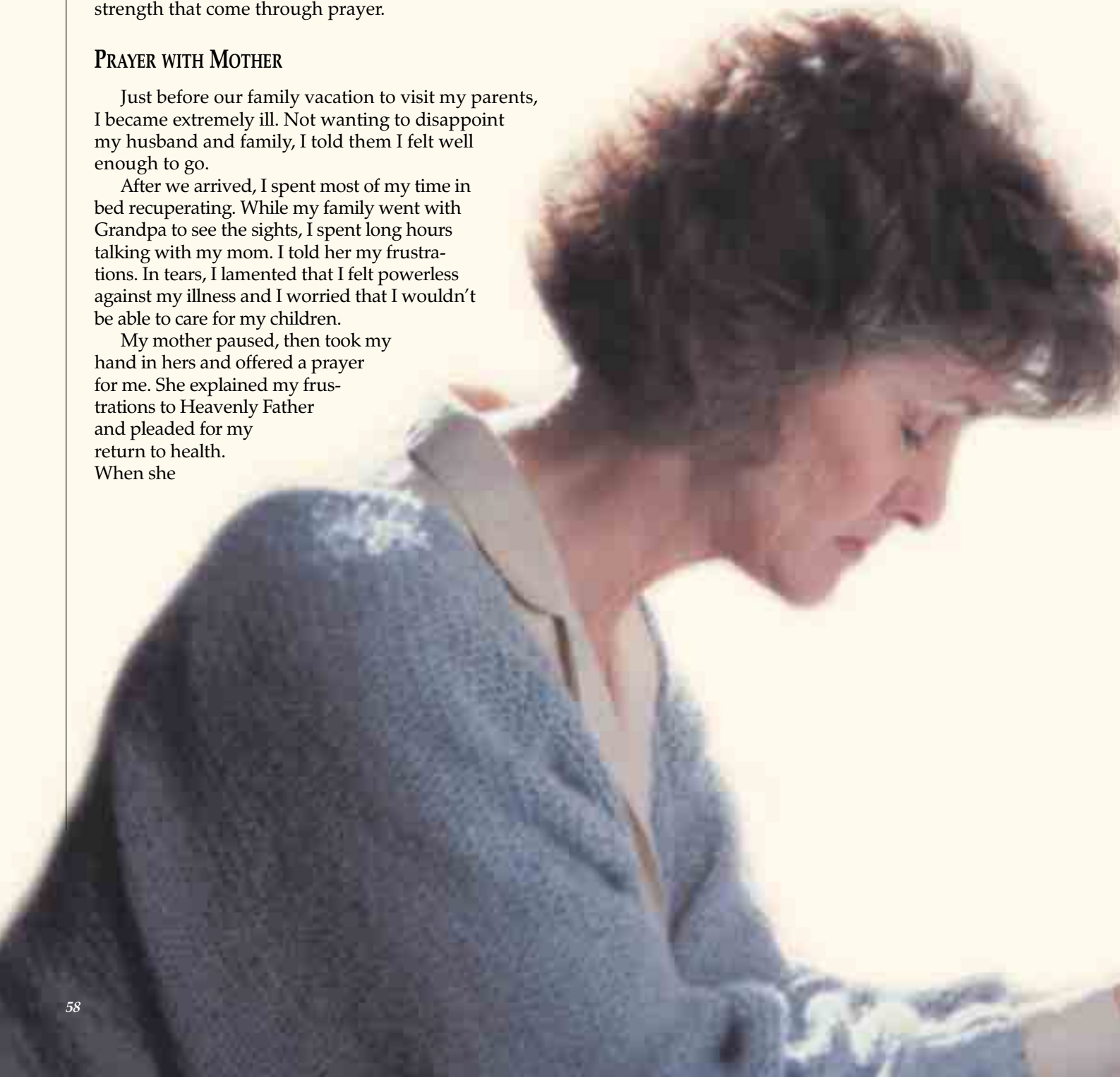
Prayer with Mother

Just before our family vacation to visit my parents, I became extremely ill. Not wanting to disappoint my husband and family, I told them I felt well enough to go.

After we arrived, I spent most of my time in bed recuperating. While my family went with Grandpa to see the sights, I spent long hours talking with my mom. I told her my frustrations. In tears, I lamented that I felt powerless against my illness and I worried that I wouldn't be able to care for my children.

My mother paused, then took my hand in hers and offered a prayer for me. She explained my frustrations to Heavenly Father and pleaded for my return to health. When she finished, I felt at peace. I returned home reassured that Heavenly Father had heard my mother's prayer. Although my illness persisted, I dealt with it better.

Months later, my daughter, then a senior in high school, came to me with a difficult challenge. Still physically weak, I wondered how I could help her. As I pondered the situation, I remembered my mother's prayer for me. I took my daughter's hand in mine and knelt with her to pray. I thanked Heavenly Father for



her and explained her problem. I asked Father in Heaven to help her. After our prayer, she hugged me and expressed her feelings of comfort.

As I reflected on the experience, a flood of memories came over me as I thought of all the times as a child—and as an adult—I had heard my parents pray for me. Humbled, I realized the heritage of prayer in my family. My ancestors, members of the handcart companies, prayed for strength when they felt they could go no farther. Thanks to them and their descendants, this tradition of prayer has been passed from one generation to the next—from my mother to me and now from me to my children.

Jesus Christ prayed for us too, setting the example of prayer for all (see John 17:20–21). And when He later visited the Nephites, He wept as "he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written. . . .

". . . And he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

"And when he had done this he wept again" (3 Ne. 17:15, 21–22).

Gratitude fills my heart for a loving Savior who would teach us to pray, and pray for us.**—Paula Hunt, Nampa 16th Ward, Nampa Idaho Stake**

"Believe in prayer," President Hinckley has taught. Many members testify of its help in their lives.

The Unyielding Knob

The heat can be extreme in Coalinga, California, where my family once lived. On one particular day the temperature was 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 °C) and climbing. We had a good air conditioner in the front-room window, but for some reason it stopped functioning. I decided to use our backup evaporative cooling unit, but, try as I may, I could not turn the knob controlling the water. I became concerned because I was home alone with my three small children.

Desperate, I used a dampened cloth to assist in gripping the knob; then I used a hammer to try to jar it loose. Neither attempt worked.

I told the children we were going to say a prayer to our Father in Heaven and ask for help. This we did. After the prayer, I looked up. The children were all looking directly at me, confident now that I could take care of this problem. I wasn't so sure, but as I looked at the knob I felt an overwhelming urge to give it just one more try.

It not only turned—it nearly bent from the strength in my fingers.

Veronica, our three-year-old daughter, said, "Heavenly Father did help you, huh, Mom?"

This was a beautiful learning experience to have such a prayer answered in the presence of my children. We knelt again and offered a humble prayer of thanks.**—JoAnne Colby, Carpinteria Ward, Santa Barbara California Stake**

A Prayer That I Might Teach

A few years ago I taught an extremely difficult and troubled group of children in school. I was upset by my inability to reach them and found myself depressed and tearful as I left school each day.

One day the woman working with me as an aide, who was not a Church member, told me she had been praying for a calming influence to enter the classroom so I could teach. She knew the power of prayer and was, I feel, prompted by the Spirit to tell me of her prayers to remind me what *I* should do.

I realized that I had been so involved with the problem that I had neglected to go to Heavenly Father for help. From then on I frequently found myself on my knees before school began, praying for inspiration. As the weeks went by, a calming spirit did enter the classroom and I was able to see that some progress was being made with the children. There were still moments of frustration, but I seemed better equipped to deal with them. I learned from this that the Holy Ghost influences us in simple ways to allow great things to happen in our lives.**—Nadine C. Doyle, Verdugo Hills First Ward, La Crescenta California Stake**

President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has said, "We learn to pray by praying. One can devote countless hours to examining the experiences of others, but nothing penetrates the human heart as does a personal, fervent prayer and its heaven-sent response.

"Such was the example of the boy Samuel. Such was the experience of young Nephi. Such was the far-reaching prayer of the youth Joseph Smith. Such can be the blessing of one who prays" ("Teach the Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 17). □

Fitly Framed to

By Dianne Dibb Forbis

When my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, my future seemed cloudy. But I was about to discover a warm environment in place—my ward.

When we first learned that my husband, Al, had Alzheimer's, I felt as if I would suffer alone in fear, apprehension, and loneliness. We were living in Rexburg, Idaho, at the time. I cried a lot and could have been overwhelmed by feelings of sadness and hopelessness. But a tight and taut refuge prevented those feelings from pouring in and rising up to engulf me. Eventually, I realized I need not drown in sorrow because the Lord has provided a way to keep out the flooding rain in times like these: He has given us the structure of wards and branches.

In my first reading of Ephesians 2:19—"Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints,

ILLUSTRATED BY CARY HENRIE; POSED BY MODELS

and of the household of God"—I assumed that this statement by Paul applied to people who joined the Church and were embraced by fellow Saints. Then when our "household" moved from one state to another, I realized the verse could also apply to members becoming integrated into a new ward after the uncomfortable circumstance of moving from a much-loved ward. At first we were strangers in our new ward. In time we became a part of it with a new group of caring ward members. In my panic and need to be understood and nurtured, I developed a great appreciation for the individuals who rallied to my support. They made sure I didn't feel like a "stranger" in affliction or a frightened "foreigner" in a wilderness of pain.

Nurturing in a ward is often a result of faithful members fulfilling Church assignments to the best of their abilities. They are Saints in training. Their efforts combine to create a Herculean achievement in shoring up one who is badly listing with despair, showing how "the body hath need of every member, that all may be edified together, that the system may be kept perfect" (D&C 84:110).

I learned many lessons as my husband and I battled with the deterioration of his mind and the subsequent stress on our marriage relationship. One thing I came to firmly believe is that the organization of the Church on earth is of divine authorship. A structure exists to handle human response to the most tragic and devastating experiences one might imagine—"The building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21). I came to know that Christ's restored Church is organized with every part fitted securely in place so all might join together, forming a safe haven similar to a temple. The parts that joined together to form an emotional and spiritual shelter for me included the following:

An inspired bishop. From time to time I needed counsel badly. A bishop must be "given to hospitality, apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2). When I talked with our bishop, he was kind and caring. I respected his great efforts to fulfill his stewardship, and I was confident that he prayed in behalf of my family. Often he taught me gospel principles I needed to recall, ponder, and put into action.

A compassionate Relief Society president. What a blessing it was to have a loving Relief Society president, for "in her tongue [was] the law of kindness" (Prov. 31:26). The shift in responsibility from one Relief Society president to

another during my long period of affliction made little difference. Both presidents had tender qualities that were enhanced and refined by their callings. They listened to me. They dispensed love. It was the elixir that helped me turn many times from despondency to hope.

Home teachers and visiting teachers. Home and visiting teachers had many opportunities to serve. I let them. I was too tired, emotionally and physically, to argue. As never before, I saw the beauty of these programs unfold. My home and visiting teachers went into action at the slightest indication of my need, ever "willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light" (Mosiah 18:8). My home teachers were a constant in a household that seemed to be turned upside down and that was now largely characterized by unpredictability. Their testimony and hope brought infusions of support. My visiting teachers, with the help of other sisters in the ward, washed the blinds in my house, scrubbed sinks, and generally brightened my environment and my countenance.

Priesthood blessings. As my husband's abilities fractured and scattered and mixed within his mind, I could no longer call upon him for needed priesthood blessings. Other priesthood bearers in our extended family lived far away. My home teachers came to deliver comfort and strength. When they weren't available, other worthy priesthood holders within the ward were ready and able as asked.

The sacrament. Another source of strength came in knowing that young priesthood bearers would never fail to do their duty in preparing and passing the sacrament. As I meditated upon the Savior's sacrifice, I received peace of mind and gained an assurance of the eternal nature of my sacred covenants with the Lord.

Sunday meetings. I received nourishment from the weekly lessons and talks that I had taken for granted for many years. Often the comments made by class members had a great impact on me, and someone's personal experience would lighten my load.

Church callings. I served as Gospel Doctrine teacher during this period, a calling which required much preparation. As Al and I struggled with the specter of Alzheimer's, I found it difficult to fit in preparation time for the weekly class. I could have opted to "retire" for a while from the calling, but I chose to remain and do my best. Although the going was tough at times, I received more than I gave. Scripture study and prayer brought me a new understanding of faith. Class members' involvement provided me with social and intellectual stimulation at a time when my at-home circumstances gave no chance for insightful conversations.

Hymns. The words of our Church hymns seemed more poignant than before. Although I am not particularly talented as a singer, I sang more readily. "I call to remembrance my song in the night: . . . Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? . . . I will remember the works of the Lord" (Ps. 77:6, 9, 11). The eternal nature of the gospel plan resounded in hymn texts and reverberated in my mind. Singing hymns lifted my spirits and helped me trust in the Lord.

The ward choir. Al had always loved to sing and had a good voice. As Alzheimer's caused his abilities to dwindle, his inclination to sing lingered on. Our ward choir met two needs: my husband could attend practices and have a much needed social experience and gain some feeling of worth, and I could have a break from the tending. Choir members willingly took over the shepherding task during choir practice. As long as Al was able to live at home, he was a respected member of the choir and was assisted so he could participate in all the choir performances and activities. "Much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary" (1 Cor. 12:22). Such seemed the saintly attitude of our choir members.

After Al died, one lovely ward member in her late 80s expressed her regret that she had not been of more help to me during the difficult times. With all honesty, I was able to tell her she did help. In her advanced years, she came to all meetings each week. She has difficulty hearing and sometimes has to be content with the unity felt in the meetings when she cannot hear the messages. But her commitment to meet together with the ward group was a great example of endurance to those like me who are relatively new at enduring. She gave prayers in church; she made comments in class. Her systematic contributions added to the total of a great infusion of positive help from a strong ward.

Usually individuals didn't know what I needed. Most often I wasn't able to specify a tangible need. But the Lord, in His omniscience, made wards and branches, church units with every part "fitly framed" to handle even needs that are difficult to discern. "Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed" (D&C 123:17). □

Dianne Dibb Forbis is a member of North Canyon Fifth Ward, Bountiful Utah North Canyon Stake.

FITLY FRAMED

"In the true Church, Christ is the chief cornerstone, the apostles and prophets are the foundation, other officers and members are fitly framed into the structure, and the building itself becomes a holy temple where God dwells by the power of his Spirit."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85), *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (1966–73), 2:504.

Delighting in Service and Good Works

Read the following with the sisters you visit, and discuss the questions, scriptures, and teachings from our Church leaders. Share your experiences and testimony, and invite those you teach to do the same.

Mosiah 2:17: "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God."

Alma 37:34: "Teach [the people] to never be weary of good works, but to be meek and lowly in heart; for such shall find rest to their souls."

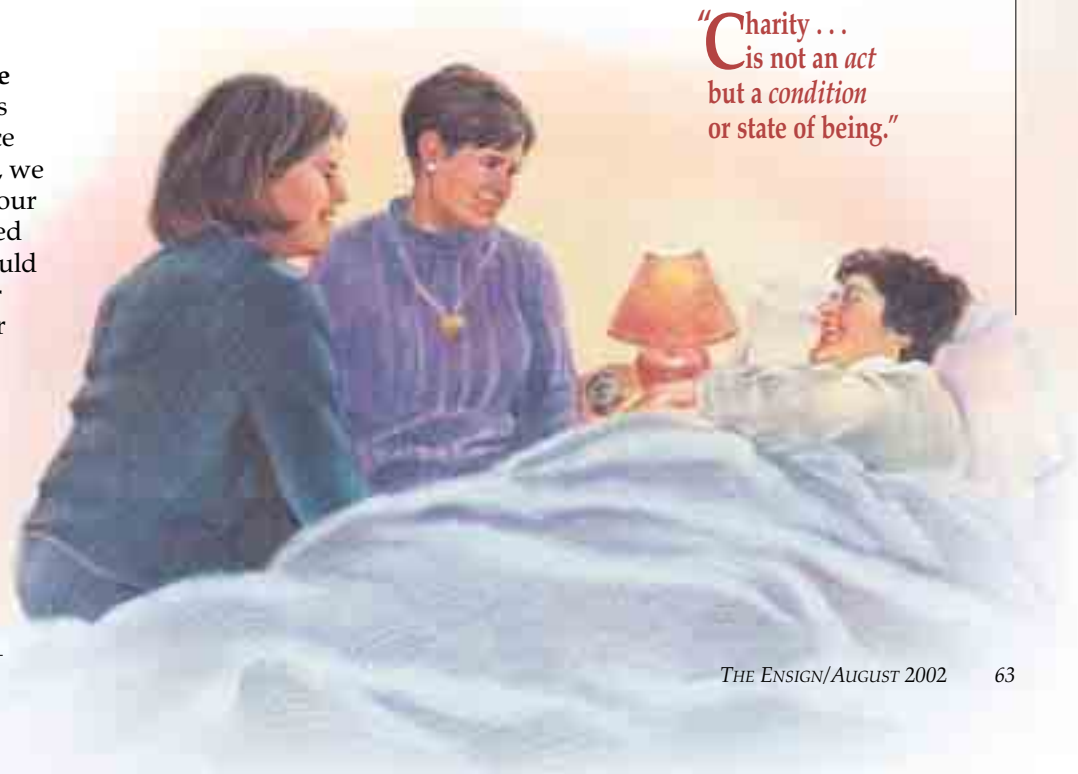
D&C 58:27–28: "Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward."

Elder Robert J. Whetten of the Seventy: "Jesus' . . . love for us motivated His atoning sacrifice for our sins. Without His love, we would be unable to return to our Heavenly Father. How He lived His life is the example we should follow. His way should be our way. 'Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am' [3 Ne. 27:27]. He showed us that we must go about doing good, that the spiritual and physical welfare of our fellowmen is as important as our own, and that we should show genuine concern and compassion for all of our Heavenly Father's children. Moroni defines Christlike love as charity. . . . It's not enough to say we believe and that we love Him; we must be found possessed with His kind of love for others at that last day. It is not necessary for us to lay down our life for others as He did, but like the Savior, we should bless the lives of others by giving of what our life is made up of—our time, our talents, our means, and ourselves" ("True Followers," *Ensign,* May 1999, 30).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We are challenged to move through a process of conversion toward that status and condition called eternal life. This is achieved not just by doing what is right, but by doing it for the right reason—for the pure love of Christ. The Apostle Paul illustrated this in his famous teaching about the importance of charity (see 1 Cor. 13). The reason charity never fails and the reason charity is greater than even the most significant acts of goodness he cited is that charity, 'the pure love of Christ' (Moro. 7:47), is not an *act* but a *condition* or state of being. Charity is attained through a succession of acts that result in a conversion. Charity is something one becomes. Thus, as Moroni declared, 'except men shall *have* charity they cannot inherit' the place prepared for them in the mansions of the Father (Ether 12:34; emphasis added)" ("The Challenge to Become," *Ensign,* Nov. 2000, 34).

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency: "God knows you and what you can become because He has known you from the beginning when you were His spirit sons and daughters. What you become will depend in large measure upon how you follow righteous principles and do good works" ("Who Do You Think You Are?" *Ensign,* Mar. 2001, 2).

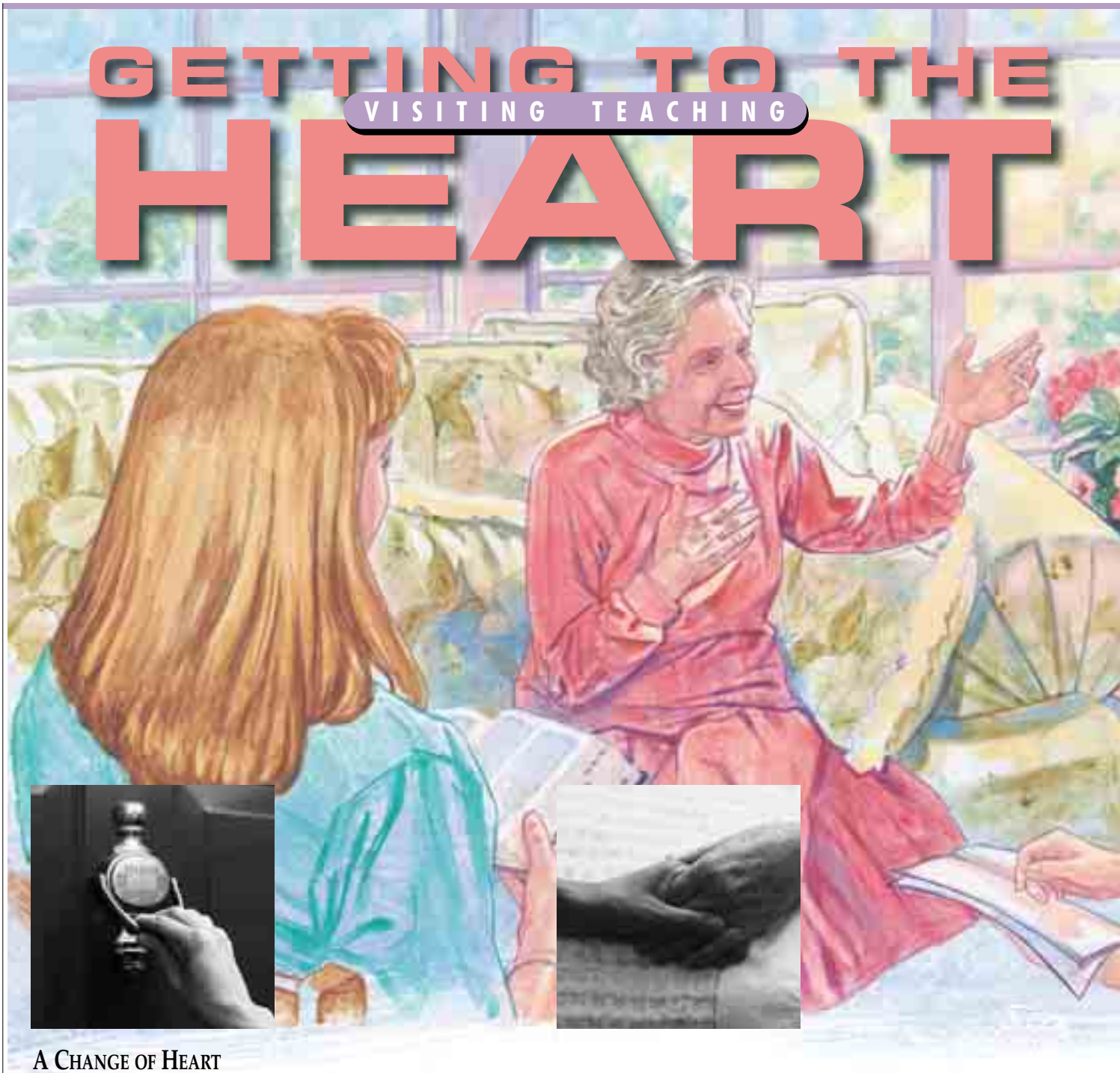
- *How is rendering service related to the Atonement of Jesus Christ?*
- *How does service affect the receiver? How does it affect the giver?*
- *How can we find more "delight" in service?* □



ILLUSTRATED BY DILLEEN MARSH

VISITING TEACHING

GETTING TO THE HEART



A Change of Heart

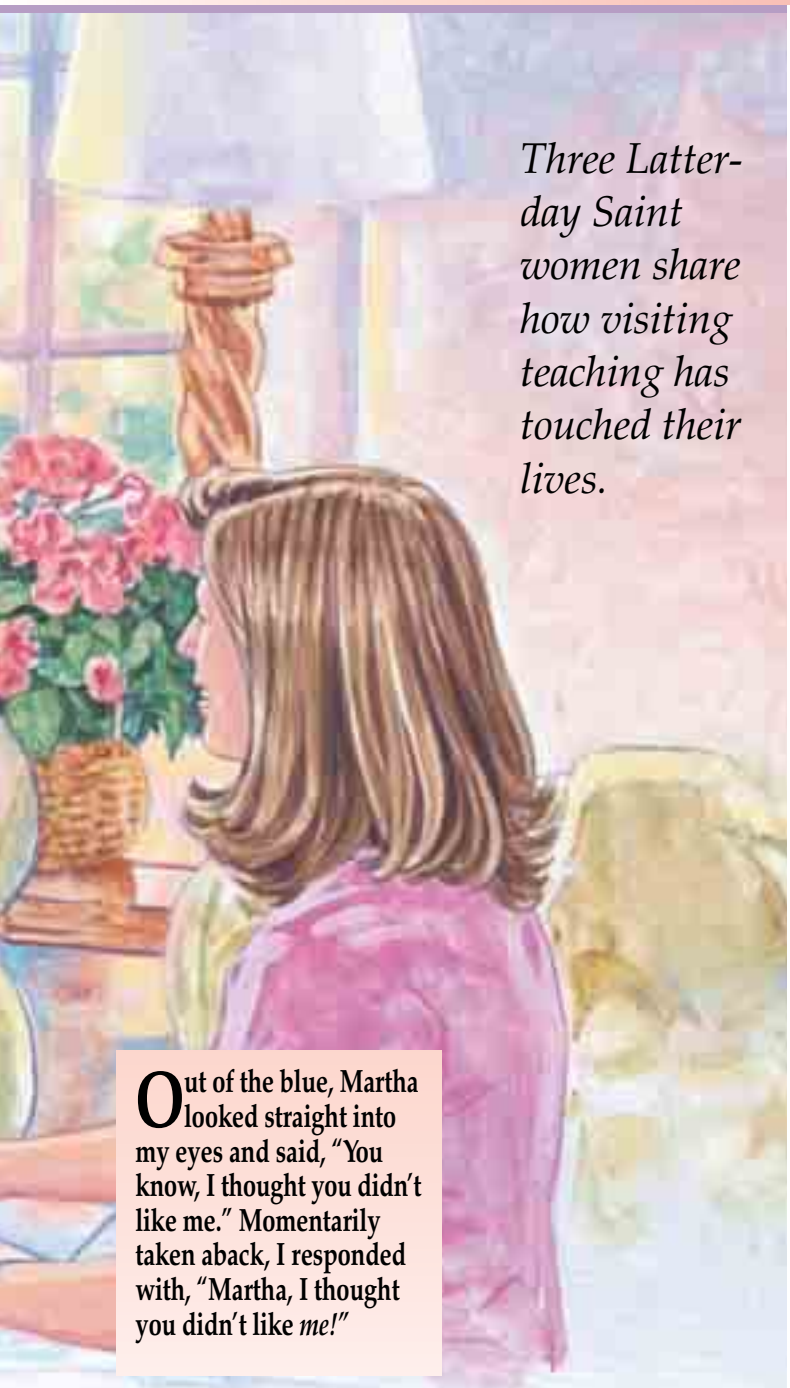
I first met Martha* at a ward social many years ago. Well into her 70s, she was spunky and quite outspoken. I became better acquainted with her about a year later when Duane, a young renter who lived in our home, was assigned as Martha's home teacher. Martha didn't hesitate to call Duane to chat or request rides to the doctor, so many of our conversations were conducted over the telephone—sometimes before 5:30 A.M. Frequently she would call when Duane was not at home. As silly as it may sound, I often had the uncomfortable feeling that Martha blamed me for his absences, and it was always unpleasant to explain that he was gone. In fact, one of our conversations ended abruptly as Martha told me, "You're just stupid!" and hung up.

That was one side of Martha. It would take me a full year later to discover another side. Inwardly I was envious of the ward members Martha liked, those who made her smile. Still, I was wary of her. I was sure she just didn't like me, and more than anything I was afraid she would embarrass me by stating her feelings publicly at Church gatherings.

For the better part of a year, we managed to stay

* *Name has been changed.*

Three Latter-day Saint women share how visiting teaching has touched their lives.



Out of the blue, Martha looked straight into my eyes and said, "You know, I thought you didn't like me." Momentarily taken aback, I responded with, "Martha, I thought you didn't like *me!*"

clear of one another. Then, some of the visiting teaching assignments within the ward were changed, and my companion and I were assigned to visit Martha. Because I was still intimidated by her, I tried to have her name removed from our list, suggesting a "personality conflict." But the visiting teaching leader felt sure of the match. How grateful I am now that she was so in tune with the Spirit of the Lord!

I wasn't sure what to expect when my companion and I approached Martha's apartment complex for our first visit. Several minutes later, as we wondered if she was purposely not answering her bell, she appeared at the door, warmly greeting us and apologizing profusely for the wait. How could I not love Martha? A change of heart was starting.

We spent our time discussing music and tatting (she absolutely could not believe I did not tat, let alone not know what it was). She proudly showed us a yellowed newspaper clipping about her volunteer work at a local school and politely listened to the visiting teaching message about our celestial potential. Then she expressed an interest in leaving this world and getting on with the next. "Does she always say what's on her mind?" I wondered.

While I was thinking, out of the blue, Martha looked straight into my eyes and said, "You know, I thought you didn't like me." Momentarily taken aback, I responded with, "Martha, I thought you didn't like *me!*" Very seriously she said, "Well, I like you," and gave me a smile, the one I had yearned for. At that instant, I more clearly understood what Alma meant by a change of heart (see Alma 5:14). All my ungodly feelings of dislike and uneasiness were quickly replaced with love and understanding. Fighting back tears, I told Martha how much I liked her too. I left that day feeling our visit was more than a success; it was the beginning of a real friendship.

We never conversed face-to-face again. Within two weeks of our visit, Martha was admitted into the hospital for cancer surgery. She called me the night before the operation. She sounded unusually weak, not like the spirited little lady I was beginning to love. Not really knowing what to say, I wished her well and promised to visit during her recuperation.

In the weeks following her surgery, my companion and I went to the hospital to see Martha. I still remember sitting beside her bed in the ICU, stroking her arm, pleading for her to get well and go home so we could talk again. But she didn't. A short time later, she passed away. I guess she really was ready to move on.

Without this experience, I would never have been able to catch a glimpse of the real Martha before she died. How grateful I am for the visiting teaching program and for the lesson I learned about looking on the heart. In doing so, my own heart was changed.
—Sheila Anderson Bruce, Minneapolis First Ward, Minneapolis Minnesota Stake

Call Loretta

For several years our young family lived in a student ward while my husband, Evan, attended school. That meant that at every semester break, about a third of the ward would move in or out, and I would usually be assigned new visiting teachers.

Each new set of visiting teachers would ask, "Are you

ILLUSTRATED BY MITCHELL HEINZE; PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN LUKE

and your husband in school?" I would tell them how much time Evan had left, and they would tell me about their husbands and their work or school. Most of them were newlyweds without children, and even though they were very kind, I often felt we didn't have much in common.

They would give me the visiting teaching message and then hand me a little slip of paper with a cute sticker and their telephone numbers on it. As they left, they would say with a smile, "Call us if you need us." I would smile in return, wave good-bye, and put the slip of paper on the refrigerator. Eventually I would get new visiting teachers, and a new slip would replace the old one.

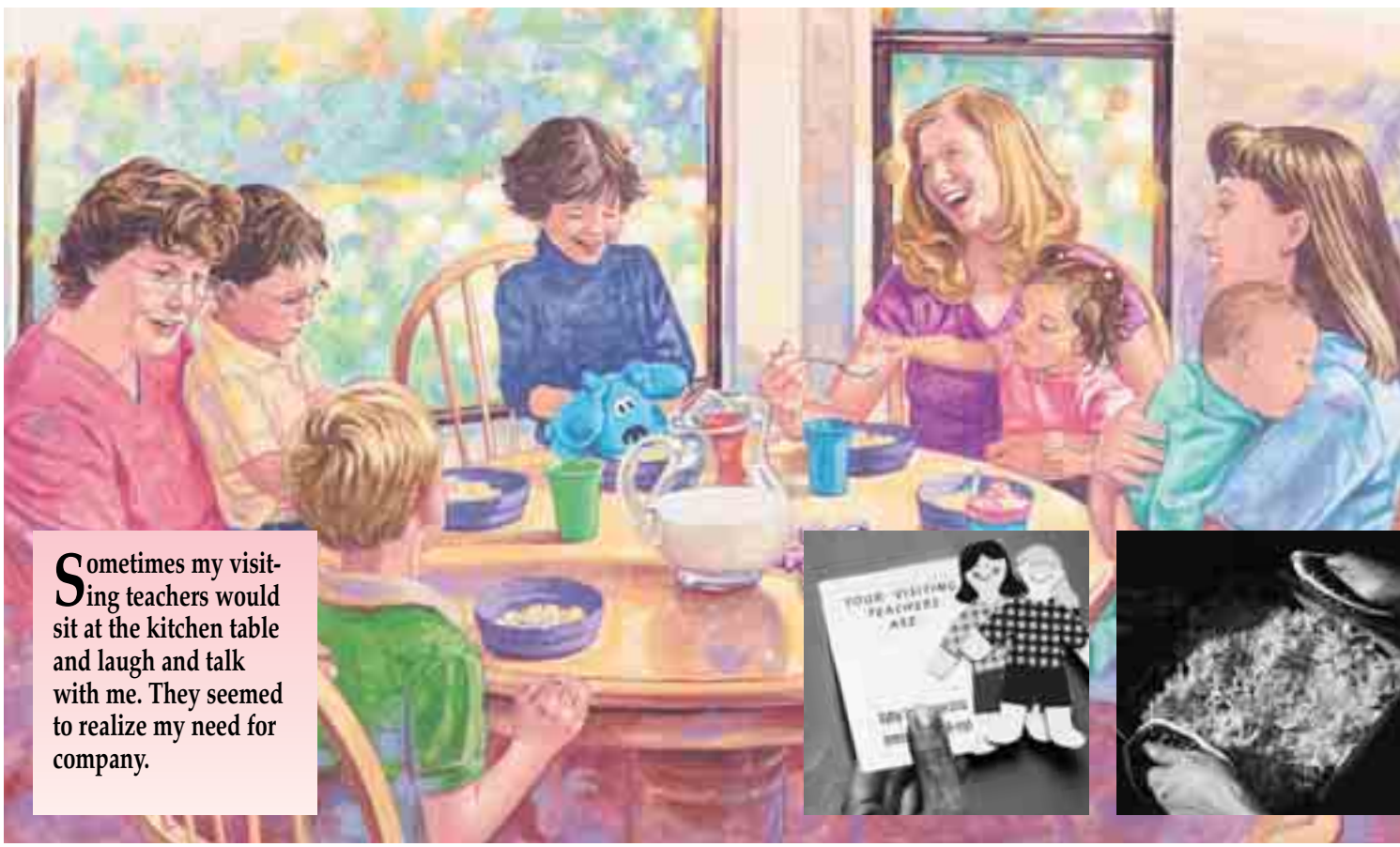
When I was expecting our second child, I was assigned a new set of visiting teachers. This time we had so much in common! Like me, Ursula and Loretta had small children to care for. Sometimes they would come when I was giving lunch to the children I baby-sat, and they would sit at the kitchen table and laugh and talk with me as I spooned applesauce and cereal into little mouths. They always lingered because they seemed to realize my need for company.

Ursula moved after she had her second baby, and I missed her so much. The next time Loretta stopped by, she said, "Call me, please, if you need cheering up or something." I was nearly in tears at the time and almost called her that same afternoon.

The months that followed were some of the most challenging of my life. We were poor, and Evan was going to school, working, and studying to the point where I rarely saw him. Being pregnant and doing baby-sitting to try to make ends meet was hard. The visits Loretta and her companion made were the bright spot in my month. I promised myself that when I got *really* depressed, I would call Loretta and we would talk and she would make me laugh and feel better. It was a treat I held out for. Many times I reached for the telephone, and then I would think, "I don't want to bother her with my problems." And I wouldn't call.

That spring, Loretta told me she was moving. Her husband had finished school, and they were on their way. I was so happy for them. It wasn't until after she left that I was saddened by the realization that now I wouldn't be able to call Loretta.

I have had many visiting teachers since then: older women, students, and mothers with children in tow. I still try to be as self-reliant as possible, but when I genuinely need help, now I don't hesitate to ask. Some sisters have brought me dinner after the birth of a child; some have been emergency baby-sitters. The older women have given me precious words of hope and comfort gleaned from their years of experience.



Sometimes my visiting teachers would sit at the kitchen table and laugh and talk with me. They seemed to realize my need for company.

Not all of my visiting teachers have become good friends, but each of them has given me some special part of themselves. Those little slips of paper on the refrigerator have come to represent more to me than just a duty on their part.

It is important to serve, and there are many people who need our help and comfort. Yet I have learned that it is all right to need help ourselves sometimes. When I have let my visiting teachers serve me, our friendships have been strengthened, and all of us have recognized our need for each other.**—Ann Whitaker, Grandview First Ward, Provo Utah Grandview Stake**

INSPIRED PROGRAMS

"Home teaching and visiting teaching are inspired programs. They are designed to reach each member of the Church each month, both the active and the less active. Please give home teaching and visiting teaching an increased emphasis."

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), "Feed My Sheep," *Ensign,* Sept. 1987, 4.

Following a Prompting

As a young newlywed—one of the few in my ward—I became a visiting teacher for the first time. I had visions of being inspirational, loving, and kind, and of doing great acts of service. In other words, I wanted to be the perfect visiting teacher. Yet when I received the names of the sisters on my route, I had feelings of trepidation. One was a sister with nine children and her own successful business. Another was a nurse who had six children and had remarried after the tragic death of her first husband. The third sister had four children and a wonderful marriage and was extremely talented. What did I have to offer these women? I was inexperienced in life, and I felt inadequate. I knew I could give them love, support, and service, but I was searching for something more.

I loved the sisters I visited, and I let them know I was available when they needed me. But other than our monthly visits, my grand dreams of service were limited to an occasional loaf of bread or a plate of cookies. It seemed their service needs were usually met by their extended family members, most of whom lived nearby.

One morning, about an hour before I was scheduled to go visiting teaching, I began thinking about Karla, one of the sisters I visited. It was a month when the visiting teachers were to choose a message from a general conference talk. My companion wouldn't be accompanying me this time, as she had just recently moved from the ward, so I had scheduled the appointments and prepared the lesson on my own the night before. Yet that morning, my lesson didn't seem right. I felt impressed to choose a different talk—one on overcoming adversity. I began to look up scriptures and resources pertaining to the topic, and I quickly made Karla a special handout with information I found in the *Family Home Evening Resource Book.*

As I was putting the finishing touches on my lesson, I questioned my choice of subject matter. Karla had seemed to be doing just fine the last time I talked to her. With some misgivings, I gathered up my materials and quickly left for my appointment.

Arriving at Karla's door, I took a deep breath before knocking. She greeted me with her usual smile and invited me in. We began chatting, and from all outward appearances she seemed happy. "Why did I have the feeling she needed this particular lesson?" I wondered. "She seems just fine. How can I talk to her about overcoming discouragement?"

I feared my lesson might sound like a lecture or, worse yet, that Karla might think I assumed she wasn't handling her life well. I hesitantly told her I had felt she needed to hear about a particular conference address, but after talking with her, I wasn't sure it was relevant to her situation. I explained how I had been praying to be in tune with the needs of the sisters I visited and how forcefully the inspiration had come to choose this particular lesson. I related how, during the hour before my appointment with her, I had found scriptures and extra resources that seemed to open up in just the right places.

Karla asked me what subject I had been impressed to discuss with her. When I told her, the smile slipped away from her lips and tears welled up in her eyes. I listened as she opened up and told me how she had been struggling during the past couple of weeks. Her husband had been working out of town, and she was feeling discouraged and alone as she dealt with some challenging circumstances.

I shared with Karla the message I had felt impressed to give. Before I arose to go, we knelt in prayer, and she thanked Heavenly Father for knowing her needs.

I will never forget that humbling moment when Karla confirmed she needed to hear the lesson I had been prompted to prepare. I was ashamed that I had doubted the necessity of my message, yet I was grateful for the opportunity to learn the importance of listening to the Lord's promptings, no matter how inadequate I felt. That day I came to better understand the importance of visiting teaching and of being an instrument in the Lord's hands.**—Claralyn C. Sant, Laguna Creek Second Ward, Sacramento California Stake** □

Don't Go through the Alley!

By Polly Daw

The summer after I graduated from high school, I took my first full-time job as a teller at a small thrift and loan office in Santa Monica, California.

One morning two employees were sick, leaving only Jon, the manager, and me in the office. One of my usual morning duties was to take the deposits from the previous working day and walk them through the back alley to the bank. This particular day, Jon suggested that I take them over in the afternoon when he'd be able to cover the teller line for me.

After lunch I grabbed the deposits and headed out the back door to the alley. I finished my business at the bank and started walking back to the office. When I reached the corner of the alley, an undeniably clear thought came to my mind: "Don't go through the alley!"

I stopped abruptly. The thought puzzled me, because the walk was much shorter through the alley and I always went that way. In a quick decision I thought, "Well, all right," and turned to walk toward Fifth Street, thinking it would be a nice change of scenery anyway. I made it to the door of our small office several minutes later than usual, hoping my boss wouldn't give me a bad time for taking too long.

As I walked through the front door, one of our elderly customers was sitting at one of the front desks. He had a stunned look on his face. Concerned, I asked, "Mr. Reed, what's the matter?"

Mr. Reed's voice was shaky as he replied that the office had just been robbed! Apparently, as Mr. Reed

ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN CALL

It was my job to take the deposits to the bank. The back alley was the shortest way to go and return.

had walked in, the thief had demanded what little money he'd had before running out the door.

After Jon completed the police report, he gave me an account of what had happened. He had been alone in the office when a man wearing a ski mask and holding a gun came to the counter demanding cash. He became very angry upon learning that most of the cash was en route to the bank.

The robber had then forced Jon into the back room near the alley door, which we always kept locked, and jerked him angrily to the floor. Then he had shoved his gun against Jon's temple and yelled profanities before finally deciding to leave.

Jon told me, "That guy was so nervous that I kept thinking, 'Please, Polly, don't come through the back door jingling your keys. This man will shoot us both!' "

As Jon told me this, a sudden calm enveloped me. In my mind I replayed the alley scene and realized I had received a divine prompting at the corner of that alley from a loving Heavenly Father.

Jon was somewhat of an atheist, and when I told him why I had changed my route that day he called it lucky or coincidental and then conceded that perhaps someone was looking out for us. I knew it went way beyond luck or chance. The scriptures give the promise that if we are worthy, "The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion" (D&C 121:46) and "will show unto you all things what ye should do" (2 Ne. 32:5).

I am extremely thankful for a most loving Heavenly Father who has given us the gift of the Holy Ghost. I know I will continue to pay attention to the promptings I receive, no matter how trivial or inconvenient the situation may seem. □

Polly Daw is a member of the Grove Creek First Ward, Pleasant Grove Utah Grove Creek Stake.

Mom, You're Singing!

By Bernadene G. Gardiner

Several years ago I began to feel severe pain in my neck, back, and legs. It soon became almost impossible for me to play the piano, type, crochet, or do anything with my right hand. I was diagnosed with dystonia, a neurological disease that affects my entire right side as well as my neck and face.

I can no longer speak above a whisper, which means I can't sing anymore. I was especially devastated to be unable to sing or play the piano because I had served as music leader or pianist among the Primary, the youth, the Sunday School, and the Relief Society since I was 16 years old—a total of about 45 years!

On 6 April 2000 I went with my son and daughter-in-law to our stake center to watch the satellite broadcast of the dedication of the Palmyra New York Temple. When it came time to stand and sing "The Spirit of God" (*Hymns,* no. 2), I started mouthing the words as I always do now. Suddenly my daughter-in-law put her arm around me and said, "Mom, you're singing!"

It was true! I was singing the way I used to sing! I sang all four verses of the song. By the time the dedication program was over, the tightness returned to my throat and the miracle had ended.

I will always be grateful to the Lord for allowing me that last opportunity to sing praises to Him. I still can't speak above a whisper, but I will always have a song of praise in my heart. □

Bernadene G. Gardiner is a member of the Alma Seventh Ward, Mesa Arizona West Stake.

The Music of Peace—in Prison

Name Withheld

I remember years ago sitting with my peers in our 14- to 15-year-old Sunday School class, discussing which hymn we might sing that day. One of us mentioned, "If You Could Hie to Kolob" (*Hymns,* no. 284). We all broke out in laughter. To us, this title seemed the funniest and most old-fogy-sounding in the hymnbook.

After discovering this hymn's title, it became a standing joke with my group of friends. Whenever there came a chance to suggest a hymn for any occasion, one of us would call out, "If You Could Hie to Kolob," and we would all have a good laugh.

I don't think any of us had ever actually heard the hymn—I certainly hadn't. At the time, rock and roll was the only kind of music I was interested in.

About 18 years later, in a very different setting, I sat in a cold concrete cell as an inmate in a state prison. I was watching TV and wearing headphones so as to hear the program and tune out the ever-present noise and profanity of my surroundings. I was listening to the Saturday afternoon session of general conference. Years of Church inactivity, battles with drug addiction, and the experience of being incarcerated had brought me to the depths of humility. The path I had followed had been a horrible way to realize that nothing is more important in life than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A musical selection by the Brigham Young University combined choir was announced, and my memory of youthful laughter was jogged when I heard the title: "If You Could Hie to Kolob." It struck me that through all this time and the many changes in my life, I still had never heard this hymn. Before I could think any further, the music began.

Before the first verse ended, I recognized I was hearing a holy hymn of uncommon and intricate beauty. The choir and organist performed magnificently. My soul was pierced by the Spirit of God, which I felt strongly through these inspired, eternal words of truth and heavenly music.

Tears began to flow, initially tears of shame and regret for my pride and ignorance that had so long separated me from the blessings of the gospel. Quickly, however, my pain was transformed into joy as I was at once consoled and instructed by the Spirit. Before the hymn ended, what had started as a pricking of my heart became the beginning of the healing of my soul.

In the several years since my release from prison, the Savior's love has continued to heal me. My life isn't easy, but living the gospel has brought me many blessings. I hold a responsible job and serve in various Church callings. I share a good relationship with my less-active parents. In my work as a facilitator in the Church's Substance Abuse Recovery Program, I now help others overcome their addictions. And the sweetest blessing of all is the one I received five years ago when I was sealed for time and eternity to a righteous young woman in the temple. I have the deepest gratitude to a patient, loving Father who truly has the power to transform the bitter into sweet. □

A Gift of Eggs and Love

By Claudia Waite Richards

I had been living for a few months in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (then Zaire), Africa, when the branch Relief Society president asked if she could come visiting teaching.

I realize now that she waited so long to visit so that I could have time to learn a little French with which to communicate. At that time our family was the only white family in the branch. Some of the women spoke French, but the majority spoke Lingala, a tribal language. Although I tried not to feel alienated because of my skin color and language, I felt very different from the sisters in my branch.

The Relief Society president was a widow with two sons. She was thin, not quite five feet tall, and always smiling a beautiful, big smile. When she arrived to visit me, she came accompanied only by the Spirit of the Lord.

After greeting me, this sister asked me to get my English Bible. She spoke very slowly so I would understand her message. We read in her French Bible, and then in my English one, Ephesians 2:19: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

I smiled as I read the verse she had chosen. In spite of our differences, she understood the struggles I was experiencing.

As she prepared to leave, this sweet sister presented me with a gift of 10 eggs. Many people in Zaire at that time ate only two meals a day, and many were starving. I knew it was a struggle for her to feed her sons. I felt guilty accepting the eggs and tried to decline the gift. But her eyes told me it was given in love.

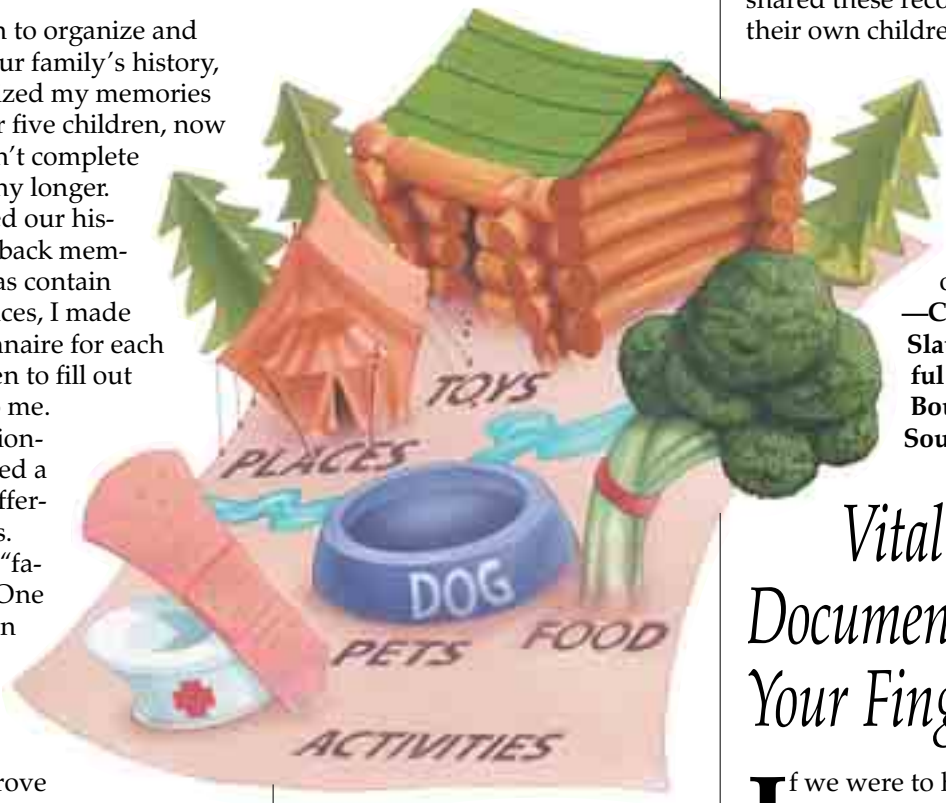
I accepted the eggs, and we basked in the love that she brought. It filled the house and made everything seem brighter. After a prayer with her, I watched her leave the yard, her petite and gracious form wrapped in African cloth. I no longer felt a stranger, but at home with the Saints of God. □

Claudia Waite Richards is a member of the Kuala Lumpur Branch, Singapore Mission.

Though I spoke little of her language, I felt accepted in my new ward in Africa when my Relief Society president came calling.

Prune Creek and Other Memories

As I began to organize and write our family's history, I realized my memories of each of our five children, now grown, weren't complete or accurate any longer. Since I wanted our history to bring back memories as well as contain dates and places, I made up a questionnaire for each of our children to fill out and return to me.



The questionnaire contained a number of different categories. The first was "favorite toys." One of the children listed a toy fort, and I recalled the day my husband and I drove into Billings, Montana, to purchase it.

A favorite activity appeared on two boys' questionnaires as "dirt clod wars." I recalled all the neighborhood boys gathering in a vacant lot, choosing up sides, and throwing dirt clods. My boys came home dirty but happy.

Two other lists were "favorite places we went" and "favorite things we did." The children included our trip to Spokane for the World's Fair, camping on Prune Creek, and visiting the beaches of northern California.

Under the heading of "favorite food," I noticed that the broccoli haters of the past now enjoy eating it as adults. Asking the children to list the names of their friends and their favorite ward activities brought back memories and added useful data to our history.

The five children also remembered a variety of illnesses and injuries. Reading their comments helped me recall the time when three of them had the measles, the family bout with chicken pox, and several trips to the emergency room for sprained ankles or broken bones.

An important part of the questionnaire called for "favorite pets." I remembered the dogs, most of the cats, a donkey named Stanley Jack, a mare named Red Lady and her colt Charley Horse, and our racing pigeons. But I'd forgotten about the hamsters, the guppies, a parakeet, and a garter snake I found one morning in John's bed after he left for school.

Besides giving me these memories from their childhoods, our children have laughed and reminded each other of many do-you-remember-the-time stories. Now, as parents, they have shared these recollections with their own children. Our family memories have given us perspective and appreciation for the great blessing we have enjoyed of being a family.

—Catherine R. Slaughter, Bountiful Seventh Ward, Bountiful Utah South Stake

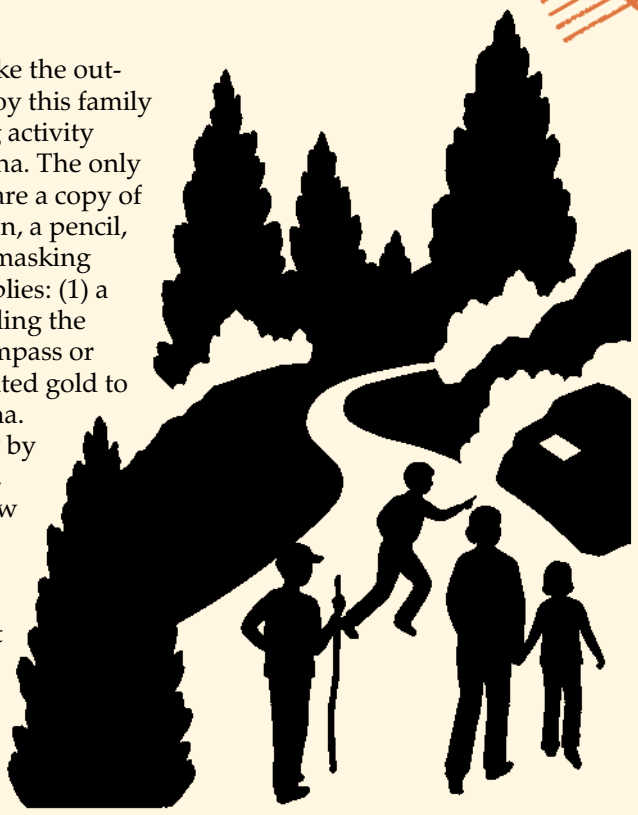
Vital Documents at Your Fingertips

If we were to have a fire or other disaster in the middle of the night, the first thing I would grab (besides my flashlight, bathrobe, and slippers) would be my portable file. I have organized a legal-size, expandable file folder containing the following valuable documents:

- Bank account, credit card information.
- Birth certificates.
- Children's vital information (adoption and guardianship papers, special medical needs, fingerprint records).
- Funeral, mortuary, cemetery plans.
- Insurance policies (life, home, health, automobile) with a list of company names, agents, premium due dates, cash values.
- Marriage certificate.
- MedicAlert information.

LEFT: ILLUSTRATED BY JOE FLORES; RIGHT: ILLUSTRATED BY BETH WHITTAKER

Follow the Liahona



Families who like the outdoors will enjoy this family home evening activity based on the Liahona. The only materials required are a copy of the Book of Mormon, a pencil, slips of paper, and masking tape. Optional supplies: (1) a picture of Lehi holding the Liahona or (2) a compass or Styrofoam ball painted gold to look like the Liahona.

Start the activity by reading 1 Nephi 16, which describes how Lehi found the Liahona in front of his tent. Ask questions such as "What did the Liahona do?" "In what ways did it guide Lehi's family?" and "How are the scriptures like the Liahona?" Emphasize that the Liahona pointed the way the family should go in the wilderness and that writing appeared on it from time to time.

Next, leave a trail of notes giving directions to the "promised land." You could leave the notes in your backyard, a park, or even a trail in a nearby canyon or forest. (Just be sure the children remove the notes after reading them.) When our family held this activity on a canyon trail, my wife walked with the children, and I was waiting at the end of the trail to give each person a big hug.

Here are some possible messages to write:

- At the top of each note, write, "Follow the Liahona."
- Where children have to choose to go left or right, leave a message saying, "Choose the right."
- Where they should keep going straight, write, "Follow the strait and narrow path."
- Where the trail leads to a dead end, write, "Detours can be dangerous."
- Near the end of the journey, write, "You are almost to the promised land. Endure to the end."
- The last note could say, "Well done! You have reached the promised land!"
- You could liken the notes to messages from the scriptures and compare reaching the promised land to entering into Heavenly Father's presence. You could also leave notes with brief messages about the first principles and ordinances of the gospel.

This activity took only a few minutes to prepare, but it proved to be a memorable adventure for our youngsters.—**Devan Jensen, Windsor Seventh Ward, Orem Utah Windsor Stake**

- Military papers.
- Real-estate documents.
- Retirement benefits.
- Social Security cards.
- Vehicle titles, registration, identification and license plate numbers.
- Wills, living wills.
- Additional documents: citizenship papers; safety deposit box (number, location); stocks, bonds, other investments; tax papers; affiliations; lists of debts.

The idea for organizing our family's most important documents in a portable file stemmed from a presentation I attended years ago, and I have used the file ever since. When my husband was hospitalized, medical personnel required a copy of his living will. I knew right where to find it and quickly made a copy for them. Keeping my file current is easy. Every year as I prepare year-end summaries for tax purposes, I also update my file.

While it is important to store some original documents in a secure place, having copies at my fingertips has brought me a measure of peace. I know that in the event of an emergency, I am as prepared as I can be.—**Berneice Neeley, Riviera Ward, Salt Lake Granite Park Stake**

PHOTO BY MARTINHO CAIRES, COURTESY *CHURCH NEWS*

Members await a dedicatory session for the Campinas Brazil Temple.

President Hinckley Dedicates Two Temples, Meets with Members

Continuing a busy season of temple dedications, President Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated the Campinas Brazil Temple and the Asunción Paraguay Temple in May. The dedications brought the total number of operating temples to 112.

During his travels, President Hinckley also met with Latter-day Saints in Jamaica and Trinidad.

Campinas Brazil Temple

On 17 May President Hinckley dedicated the Campinas Brazil Temple in four sessions.

In the industrial city of Campinas, the new temple has become a beacon of light to the community. "It is brilliant," said Nei Tobias Garcia Jr., son of the city's first stake president. "Its light in the dark night serves as a teaching that proclaims the truth."

In the dedicatory prayer, President Hinckley invoked the blessings of the Lord for the Saints in Brazil. "Here we will honor Thee in carrying forward the great work of salvation and exaltation made possible through the atoning sacrifice of Thy Beloved Son, our precious Lord," said President Hinckley. "Bless Thy Saints in this great nation of Brazil. As they walk in obedience before Thee, open the windows of heaven and shower down blessings upon them."

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, also attended the dedication. President Faust, who was an early missionary to Brazil, conducted the temple's groundbreaking ceremony four years ago, in May 1998. Other General Authorities attending the dedication were Elder Athos M. Amorim of the Seventy, President of the Brazil South Area, and his counselors, Elders Neil L. Andersen and Adhemar Damiani of the Seventy.

More than 8,500 people attended the dedication, and some 75,000 people attended the temple's open house, including Campinas mayor Izalene Tiene. "The city was in need at this time of precisely this kind of spiritual refuge," Mrs. Tiene said. Campinas has experienced recent civil unrest that culminated in the assassination of Mrs. Tiene's predecessor, Antonio da Costa Santos.

Many who attended the open house and dedication shed tears of gratitude for the sense of peace they felt at the temple.

Asunción Paraguay Temple

Just two days after dedicating the Campinas temple, President Hinckley dedicated the Asunción Paraguay Temple, the Church's 112th temple. With the 19 May dedication, every Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking nation in South America now has a temple.

"Marvelous has been the growth of Thy work in this part of Thy vineyard," said President Hinckley in the dedicatory prayer. "We thank Thee for the labors of missionaries who have taught the everlasting gospel. We thank Thee for all who with open hearts and open minds have accepted these teachings and entered the waters of baptism to become members of Thy Church."

President Faust and Elder Jay E. Jensen of the Seventy, President of the South America South Area, also attended the dedication.

When the Asunción temple was first announced in general conference in April 2000, the Saints in Paraguay literally shouted for joy. "When we heard the news that a temple was to be built in Paraguay, we clapped and jumped and hollered. We wanted the Lord to know how happy we were," says President Abilio Samaniego, counselor in

PHOTO BY JASON SWENSEN, *CHURCH NEWS*

Dedication of the Asunción Paraguay Temple places a temple in every Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking country of South America.

the Asunción temple presidency. "The Lord has shown us much love, and I am grateful."

Meeting Members in Jamaica, Trinidad

More than 2,000 people from Jamaica and the Cayman Islands gathered on 15 May in Kingston, Jamaica, to hear President Hinckley speak. "I can't tell you how pleased they were to think that the prophet would stop here," said Norman G. Angus, president of the Jamaica Kingston Mission.

President Hinckley told the Saints they are a blessing to the land of Jamaica. He admonished them to respect their country, to share the gospel with those around them, and to strengthen their families. He told the youth they are the future of the Church and counseled them to be strong. He also promised blessings to those who pay their tithes and offerings.

President Faust also bore his testimony of missionary work and the restored gospel.

In Port of Spain, Trinidad, President Hinckley spoke to a gathering of almost 900 people, including members, government and civic leaders, and journalists. He called on those listening to love their spouses and children, to treat one another with acceptance and respect, and to faithfully pay their tithes and offerings. He also encouraged members to reach out to new converts.

"I place upon you a responsibility to put your arms around others and welcome them and make them feel at home and answer their questions and give them encouragement when they come into the Church," President Hinckley said. "In so doing you will bless their lives many times over."

President Faust also spoke to the congregation, sharing his thoughts about gaining and maintaining a testimony. "Our testimonies come from a personal inward belief," he said. "We are all converts to the Church."

During their visit, President Hinckley and President Faust met with Patrick Manning, prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago. They discussed the work of the Church in the area, and President Hinckley thanked the prime minister for allowing Church activities and proselytizing to take place. □

Church Leaders Counsel Graduates, Receive Honors

Members of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Seventy counseled graduates at schools in Idaho and Utah during 2002 commencement exercises, and both President Gordon B. Hinckley and President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, received honorary degrees.

The honor for President Hinckley was a first of its kind, and it came at a landmark moment for the school.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEWIS, BYU—IDAHO

President Gordon B. Hinckley receives doctoral hood from Elder Henry B. Eyring and Donald Bird, BYU—Idaho's academic vice-president.

Rexburg, Idaho

President Hinckley presided at the first commencement for BYU—Idaho, formerly Ricks College, on 27 April. For his lifetime of Christian service and leadership, he was awarded an honorary doctorate, the first such degree ever presented by the school. Nearly 2,500 students also received degrees from the now four-year institution.

During his address, President Hinckley said the Church Board of Education had long been troubled by the fact that an ever-diminishing percentage of young people could attend a Church-sponsored university. "While reflecting on this fact, the thought came, and I am confident it was inspiration, that we could increase the number touched by our higher education program if Ricks were to become a four-year school offering baccalaureate degrees," President Hinckley said.

He told the graduates: "Keep the faith. This is my message to you. . . . My challenge to you this morning is that throughout your lives you cultivate and act with faith—faith in yourselves, faith in your associates, faith in the Church, faith in God, your Eternal Father."

He continued: "You did not come into the world to fail. You came into the world to succeed," adding, "You will be amazed at what might happen when in faith you take a step forward."

President Hinckley admonished: "Never lose faith in yourself. Never lose faith in your capacity to do good and worthwhile things. You cannot be arrogant. You cannot be conceited. You can be quiet and humble and forward looking and full of hope, the hope that blossoms into faith."

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—Church Commissioner of Education and a former president of Ricks College—told the graduates that they will be forever in debt to the teachers, family

PHOTO BY STUART JOHNSON, *CHURCH NEWS*

U.S. Secretary of Education Roderick Paige, second from left, visits with Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, left; Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy, president of BYU; and Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

members, and tithe payers who made their education possible.

"You can't repay your benefactors. You could not ever find them, and they wouldn't take your money if you offered it. But you can from this day forward act so that your debt will be steadily reduced," he said.

"First, wherever you may labor in life, give more than you take. Second, whoever is around you in life, find someone to help. And third, ask God to multiply the power of your efforts to give and to help."

Elder Eyring placed the hood representing the honorary degree on President Hinckley, assisted by Donald Bird, academic vice-president of BYU—Idaho.

In conferring the honorary doctorate on the President of the Church, BYU—Idaho president David A. Bednar said, "As the transition from Ricks College to Brigham Young University—Idaho moves forward, we have special reason to honor President Hinckley." President Bednar, who also serves as an Area Authority Seventy, explained that President Hinckley's "vision of education has largely impacted the direction of the new four-year institution, as well as the lives of each student who attends."

The first graduates to receive bachelor's (four-year) degrees from BYU—Idaho were 28 interior design students. The remainder of graduates received associate (two-year) degrees. Among the graduates were 56 international students.

Salt Lake City, Utah

President Faust was one of four people who received honorary degrees on 10 May at the University of Utah commencement. The honor recognized his leadership in legal, civic, and Church affairs.

In his brief response, President Faust spoke to some 6,500 graduates of his own opportunities to teach and of the profound effect that outstanding teachers have had on his life.

"In truth my teachers have all been legion," he said. He mentioned his parents, children, grandchildren, and particularly his wife, Ruth. He also named three of the teachers who had profound influence on him during his formal schooling.

But, President Faust said, some of the most important of his learning came through another teacher, "even the greatest of all."

"I must acknowledge the learning that has come to me in my life from the Holy Spirit of God," he commented, explaining, "At times this knowledge has come, and it could not possibly have come from any other source."

Chief Justice Christine Durham of the Utah Supreme Court offered the commencement address.

Provo, Utah

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles presided at the commencement for Brigham Young University on 25 April and spoke to the more than 6,400 graduates. Elder Eyring also spoke, as did Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy, BYU President. Roderick Paige, U.S. secretary of education, was the principal speaker for the occasion.

"Strong families are the backbone of society," Mr. Paige told the graduates. Homes shape the people who come out of them, he said, and "it is in our families where we learn that being a good mom or dad is the most important job any of us could ever have."

All of us, he said, "must let faith be the fire within us." He counseled graduates that success has more to do with serving than receiving.

Elder Ballard also spoke of service, calling on the graduates to help make the world a more peaceful place to live. He urged them to let the testimony of Jesus Christ "become ever more powerful in our life." Then he added, "That will happen as you serve Him."

Elder Eyring told the graduates that service is one way to achieve the purpose of their education,

PHOTO BY MATTHEW HATFIELD

President James E. Faust receives his honorary degree.

even at times when they are torn between the demands to provide and care for a family and to manage other responsibilities. "Your key and mine to rising to our potential as servants is to know our Master, to do for Him what we can, and to be content to leave the residue in His hands."

Remember, he said, "that you serve a Master who loves you, who knows you, and who is all powerful. He has created not demands for your service but opportunities for your growth."

These opportunities bring blessings, he said. "As you go to serve Him, rather than being demeaned, you will be lifted up."

In his brief remarks, Elder Bateman noted that the 6,435 graduates come from all 50 United States and from 51 other countries, and that the university is nationally recognized and "rapidly becoming known internationally." He said that during the Olympics in February, nearly 60 national and international news organizations visited the campus.

"You are an elect group," he said. "May you draw upon the lessons of life learned here. May you become an unusual force for good in your communities, and may you humbly stand for the right."

Salt Lake City

At the commencement for LDS Business College on 9 May, Elder F. Burton Howard of the Seventy told graduates not to be taken in by common worldly myths about success, but to be obedient to principles that will make them successful in eternal terms.

He told them success does not come from choosing the "right" profession, rising to the top, making a lot of money, or even knowing right now what they will do with the rest of their lives. But filling the measure of their creation on the earth (see D&C 88:25) will have much to do with their persistent effort and their integrity. He counseled them to persevere in order to achieve and to be sure morality governs their professional as well as personal lives. □

Research Foundation Honors Elder Maxwell

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles received the 2002 Legacy of Life Award from the Deseret Foundation's Heart and Lung Research Foundation at an annual banquet on 18 April.

The award, Elder Maxwell remarked, will "spur me to try to deserve what you're kind enough to bestow." He reminded those attending the banquet that "as long as our hearts pump, some of the time they should pulsate because we're reaching out to others. And as long as there is breath in our lungs, some of that breath should be used to bestow on others deserved commendation and needed encouragement."

The Heart and Lung Research Foundation annually bestows the Legacy of Life award on a leader with Utah ties who has made significant contributions to the community and to the well-being of mankind. Elder Maxwell was selected because his life achievements have "made the world and the lives of all us dwelling in it better," said David G. Thomas, chairman of the Foundation's Community Advisory Council.

Past recipients include, among others, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1998), Utah governor Michael O. Leavitt (1999), Latter-day Saint industrialist Jon M. Huntsman (1994), and Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1993).

Among those attending the awards banquet were President Hinckley; President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency; President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency; and Elder Maxwell's wife, Colleen, and other family members. The program featured a video tribute describing Elder Maxwell's influence and contributions. Among those taking part in the tribute were President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; and Elder Bruce C. Hafen of the Seventy. □

Members Cope with Effects of Tornado, Floods

Members were among those affected by four recent natural disasters, but in each case they escaped serious injury.

When a level F-5 tornado hit La Plata, Maryland, on 28 April, it left 5 people dead, 738 homes damaged, and 49 businesses destroyed. Three LDS families lost property as a result of the storm. The tornado was the second worst ever to strike the eastern coast of the United States.

Along with providing disaster supplies, food, and building materials to the community, the Church offered its facilities to three other churches that were damaged by the tornado. Schoolchildren from a local private school met in a Latter-day Saint meetinghouse until schools adjourned in June.

As part of the massive cleanup effort, missionaries and members helped clean debris and organized meals for the volunteers and victims. They also helped sort the many commodities sent to relief agencies.

In Panama during May, heavy rains brought some flooding to the northwestern part of the country. At least 400 people in rural areas were forced from their homes. Members of one LDS family lost their home and all their possessions. Another 14 member families were left in need of basic supplies. Local Church

leaders assisted members with food, clothing, shelter, and medicine.

The heavy rains of May also brought flooding in areas of Honduras and Nicaragua. In Nicaragua, some 30,000 people were affected, including 600 member families; many of these members were staying with friends and neighbors. No members were reported among those evacuated in Honduras. Local Church leaders provided aid for members in need in the affected areas. At the request of the government of Nicaragua, the Church shipped two container loads of food, clothing, and personal hygiene kits to help with relief efforts.

In Chile, the heaviest rains in 100 years caused flooding that affected as many as 100,000 people and killed 9. No Church members were injured. The homes of 170 member families sustained damage, but welfare funds were used to provide for emergency repairs and relief supplies. Two Church meetinghouses sustained minor flood damage. □

Women Produce Thousands of Humanitarian Service Items

As part of the annual Brigham Young University Women's Conference, Relief Society sisters took part in a massive service project on 3 May. Thousands of women organized into assembly lines to create hygiene kits, school-supply packages, and fleece hats and jackets to send to disaster victims or others in need all over the world. As a group, the sisters assembled some 67,000 hygiene kits and 15,000 school kits.

The kits will be distributed by the Latter-day Saint Humanitarian Center in Salt Lake City. There is constant demand for them in many different areas of the world.

Major corporations donated most of the materials for the school kits, hats, and jackets. □

Discount Offered on Temple Clothing

In an effort to help members obtain their own temple clothing, the Church continues to offer a substantial discount on the first-time purchase of temple clothing.

The First Presidency initially announced the discount in a letter dated 6 October 1998 to encourage endowed members to purchase their own temple clothing and to use it when performing temple ordinances. "The preparation and care of one's own temple clothing will enhance the feeling of reverence and gratitude for this sacred work," the First Presidency letter said.

Members can purchase temple clothing through local distribution centers. □

In the Spotlight

Italian TV Program Features Primary

The national Italian television network, RAI, recently aired a program, "Let's Protect Our Children," which featured the Church and its Primary organization. The program, aired on 11 April, was part of an ongoing series, *Ten Minutes Of*.

Moderator Carlo Fontana spoke with Sergio Belforti, president of the Milan Italy Stake and a pediatrician and father of four children; Emanuela De Matteis, a Primary teacher; and Giuseppe Pasta, the Church's national director of public affairs.

Issues such as the fight against child abuse were discussed. The Church's Primary programs were described as a way of protecting children, and the LDS panelists were able to explain Church teachings about children and families.

Cambodian King Receives Church Representatives

Church representatives met on 6 May with the king of Cambodia. Among other things, they talked about the Church's activities in Cambodia and about its emphasis on families.

King Norodom Sihanouk and his wife,

Policies and Announcements

The First Presidency has sent the following letter, dated 2 May 2002, to priesthood leaders.

Bearing of Testimonies in Fast and Testimony Meeting

We are concerned that in some instances, members who desire to bear their testimonies in fast and testimony meeting do not have the opportunity to do so. Bishoprics are encouraged to help all people learn to express a brief, heartfelt testimony of the Savior, His teachings, and the Restoration, so that more members may have the opportunity to participate.

Parents and teachers should help children learn what a testimony is and when it is appropriate for them to express it. It may be best to have younger children learn to share their testimonies at such times as family home evening or when giving talks in Primary until they are old enough to do so in a fast and testimony meeting.

We encourage bishoprics to teach these important principles to priesthood and auxiliary leaders and to all ward members. □

Mission president John P. Colton presents gifts to King Norodom Sihanouk.

Mony Neat Sihanouk, received President John P. Colton of the Cambodia Phnom Penh Mission and his wife, Barbara; President Colton's counselor Elder Gordon Haight and his wife, Emma; Elder Ralph and Sister Charla Francis, representing LDS charities; Elder David Rasmussen, assistant to the president; and Elder Tol Koim, a native Cambodian missionary.

The visitors presented the king with two copies of the Book of Mormon, one newly translated in Khmer and one in French, along with a record documenting Church activities in the country, including the delivery of humanitarian aid and the providing of educational help through the Latter-day Saint Charities learning center.

Soldier in the Spotlight

The face on the cover of a national magazine the day before Memorial Day in the United States was that of a young soldier from Morgan, Utah. Specialist Matthew L. Hinck was chosen to represent U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan for a story in the 26 May issue of *Parade,* a Sunday supplement for many newspapers. Brother Hinck is stationed in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He and his wife, Ann, also from Morgan, are members of the branch in Princeton, Kentucky.

Food for Famine Relief

Humanitarian volunteers gathered at Welfare Square in Salt Lake City on 29 and 30 May to pack nearly 7,000 boxes of emergency food supplies for the suffering people of drought-stricken Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Madagascar.

The worst drought in 50 years is affecting some 20 million Africans in Malawi alone.

Volunteers pack food boxes.

More than 300 Church members took part in preparing the emergency food boxes. The Church also sent four large containers of clothing and purchased 250 tons of grain from surrounding countries to help people in the drought areas.

Home Storage: Catching the Spirit

Members of four stakes in American Samoa have enthusiastically welcomed a new emphasis on home storage. They packed 40,000 pounds of food in three months, using foil pouches that protect rice, sugar, and flour in the warm temperatures and humid environment of the tropics.

The procuring of two sealing machines helped spur the storage drive, with the effort being assisted by Elder Ronald and Sister Rose Harvey, welfare service missionaries from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Local priesthood leaders have directed and helped give impetus to the efforts. President Falema'o M. Pili of the Pago Pago West Stake, chairman of the welfare committee in American Samoa, helped seal and pack the first 50 pounds of rice. Saints from the Pago Pago Samoa, Pago Pago Samoa Central, Pago Pago Samoa Mapusaga, and Pago Pago Samoa West Stakes have come to the bishops' storehouse as families, ward groups, and individuals to take part in packing food for home storage. □

Comment

Call for Articles

If you have had experience pertaining to the following, we invite you to share your suggestions: *"As a married couple with busy schedules, we want to make sure that we continue our courtship. What are some creative, less-expensive ways for husbands and wives to show each other they are still in love, even after many years of marriage?"*

Send responses by 15 September to *Ensign* Editorial, 24th Floor, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-3224. At the top of your submission, write "Questions and Answers," along with your name, address, telephone number, ward, and stake. You may also reply by e-mail to **cur-editorial-ensign@ldschurch.org**. Put "Questions and Answers" in the subject line.

While we cannot acknowledge receipt of individual responses, authors whose submissions are selected for publication will be notified. If you want your manuscript returned, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Great Photos!

I want each of the photographers whose work appeared in the May 2002 *Ensign* to know how inspiring it is. I wish I could see the photos that didn't make it into the issue! I am grateful for the photographers' abilities and gifts to see.

Deborah Kent
Moberly, Missouri

Making the Most of This Issue

A U G U S T 2 0 0 2

To Strengthen Your Family

• Stories from Latter-day Saint Voices can help you teach important gospel principles. For an example of how the Holy Ghost can protect and guide us, read "Don't Go through the Alley!" page 68.

• Begin a discussion about music and its effect on us by reading "The Music of Peace—in Prison," page 70.

• Want some variety in your home evening? Why not hold it outdoors? It can be both fun and instructional. For ideas, including a way your family can "Follow the *Liahona*," see page 73.

Me, a Pioneer?

She was just a teenager when she became the first Church member in her family and one of the first Latter-day Saints in Taiwan. See page 11 for her story.

Will You Choose Happiness?

"Our success or failure, peace or discontent, happiness or misery depends upon the choices we make each day," says Elder W. Craig Zwick of the Seventy. His suggestions and encouragement for making righteous choices begin on page 42.

The Visiting Teaching Difference

Three stories, three testimonies—but the same sisterhood, bringing blessings through visiting teaching. See pages 64–67.

Building Your Scripture Foundation

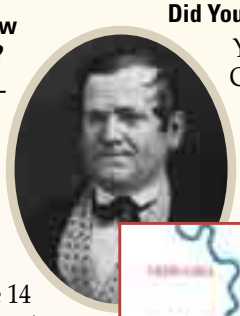
• The passing of the mantle of authority from Elijah to Elisha teaches valuable lessons about how the Lord releases one Church leader and calls a new one. See page 24.

• How can we avoid spiritual leprosy? The experiences of a powerful military leader and of a servant to a prophet offer valuable insights. Read about Naaman and Gehazi, page 27.

They Remembered When He Could Not

Alzheimer's was taking his memory, and his wife struggled to care for him. See page 60 to learn how a ward remembered their needs.

What Do You Know about Kanesville?



As a major outfitting post for pioneers going west, Kanesville, Iowa, played a vital role in Latter-day Saint history. See page 14 for the fascinating story.

To Escape from Sin

A woman feels trapped by same-sex attraction and despairs of ever being worthy of Heavenly Father's love. Can she find the peace she seeks? See page 48.

Are Your Records Safe?

Do you know where your family's important records are? Organize them in a portable file, and you're ready in case of an emergency. See page 72.

Help with Your History

Need help remembering dates and other information for your family history? Prepare a questionnaire and involve the whole family, page 72.

Home Teachers and Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pages 2 and 63.

Did You Know?

You can view the Church magazines on-line either as text or as magazine pages. The *Ensign, New Era,* and *Friend* are available from their beginning in 1971 as HTML (text) files on the Church's Web site **www.lds.org**. The *Liahona*, the Church's international magazine, is available in English from 1977. All four of the magazines are available as PDF (full-page format) files from January 2001.

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An Angel Touched Him, ***by Walter Rane***

COURTESY MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART

"And as [Elijah] lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again" (1 Kgs. 19:5–6).

"How grateful I am for the visiting teaching program and for the lesson I learned about looking on the heart. In doing so, my own heart was changed" (see "Visiting Teaching: Getting to the Heart," p. 65).

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